

# KERIDES

## THE THINKER

**Murder mysteries  
set in ancient  
Egypt... as  
heard on  
IMAGINATION  
THEATER**



**THE COLLECTED SCRIPTS**  
Volume One: Episodes 1-8  
written by  
IAIN McLAUGHLIN and CLAIRE BARTLETT

# **KERIDES THE THINKER**

THE COLLECTED SCRIPTS

VOLUME ONE

EPISODES 1 – 8

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**KERIDES THE THINKER**

created by

IAIN McLAUGHLIN

and

CLAIRE BARTLETT

# FOR IMAGINATION THEATER

For Jim French, Larry Albert and Sable Jak, who continue to give Kerides and Adrea a home at Imagination Theater and to Ulric Dihle and Sarah Schenkkan who make them live and breathe along with Stephen Weyte and Steve Manning. Thank you all for making these murders so much fun to commit... to paper, obviously...

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# KERIDES THE THINKER

Introduction by Iain McLaughlin

In 2005 I had written a number of audio plays for British producers Big Finish Productions. They were all in the Doctor Who universe. I had written short stories, novellas and a novel based around the Doctor Who universe as well. Some of them I had written alone but I had started working with Claire Bartlett. Claire comes at stories in a very different way than I do. She is as non-geek as it's possible to be whereas I wear my geek badge with pride. But for whatever reason, we work well together.

We had finished a couple of plays for UNIT, a Doctor Who audio spin-off series as well as a novella and a novel, both of which were also Doctor Who spin-offs. Doctor Who is a great universe to play in. That means there are a lot of writers chasing a set number of slots. So, we went looking for other audio producers. I had happened across Imagination Theater online some time before and had enjoyed a couple of their Sherlock Holmes plays but I hadn't pursued anything with them. As luck would have it, a good friend, Daniel McGachey, sent me a link to Imagination Theater's website suggesting I check out their Holmes plays. I listened to some more of their plays, including a Harry Nile this time and I liked what I heard. After a conversation with Claire we decided to pitch something to them.

*But what?*

Claire and I write in a bar or a café. More accurately, we do our plotting in bars and cafes, depending on how much time we have. We sat down, threw some ideas around, rejected a lot, but decided that a crime thriller was the best bet. Our natural style involves a lot of humour so we deliberately decided to make the humour very up front in the piece. Humorous thrillers made me think of *The Thin Man*. I loved the style of those movies. I loved the way the dialogue zinged back and forth. So that was in. But where would we set it? Imagination already had the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> well covered. That meant going further back, and as Claire pointed out, I have a habit of writing about Egypt and Woolly Mammoths. Not at the same time, I'd point out. Woolly Mammoths aren't noted for their sparkling repartee so that took us to Egypt. I had read a couple of Paul Doherty's excellent thrillers set in ancient Egypt, involving Pharaoh Hatchepsut. They're enjoyable books but they meant we had to look for a different time period. I had been reading about Alexander the Great and what had happened to his empire after his death. It was split into sections, each of which was ruled by one of his closest advisers. Egypt had passed to the Greek, Ptolemy. That era would give us Alexandria, which was the most advanced city in the world at the time. It had the enormous Pharos Lighthouse and the famed Library of Alexandria. That

sounded like a good place for mysteries to us. Who would be in Alexandria? A scholar, obviously. We thought it would be fun to make him young, inexperienced and though he was immensely clever, he would be out of his depth in the big city. That meant he needed a sidekick who was street-smart. It had to be a female so we could get the flirty banter flowing. What kind of young woman would have free reign to move around town and would know everything the young scholar didn't? A princess? We thought about it but I had already created the female Pharaoh Erimem for Big Finish's Doctor Who plays. That would be too much like rehashing what had already been done. A slave, on the other hand... a slave could go everywhere and know everything. And if it was a slave with a mouth full of attitude, our young scholar would be kept on his toes.

Ideas for names bounced around. Because the Pharaoh was Greek, we decided to make the scholar a Greek as well. We looked at names, bounced some around and in the end, over coffee and cake in the coffee shop upstairs from Dundee's Waterstones bookshop we settled on Kerides. Adrea's name arrived much quicker.

With the tone in place, the lead characters in place we settled down to work out the plot of the first story. This was when I discovered that Claire is very good at planning murders. I have never got on her bad side since.

## KERIDES THE THINKER

ALEXANDRIA 276BC

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 28<sup>th</sup> May 2006

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

**KERIDES:** Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

**ADREA:** 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and when we first meet her, a slave. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II. He's old and widely respected. Anyone who takes his age for a sign of weakness makes a huge mistake. A very astute man.

KARNAK: Head of the Palace Guard. A no-nonsense cop of his day. Harsh but fair. He and Karnak are old friends despite their differences.

SHOFREK: Adrea's master and a much respected man both at court and in the city. Recently widowed.

SHEM: A rogue. A thief who robs Kerides - but who also has a thriving stall in the market. He's a shifty character but a useful informant if there are more stories for Kerides.

GUARD: A couple of lines.

SAILOR: A couple of lines.

FX: A BOAT AT SEA, CREAKING, MAYBE THE FLAP OF A SAIL. SEAGULLS SCREECH.

SAILOR: Stand by on the pier.

KERIDES: (QUIETLY TO HIMSELF)  
Alexandria...

SHEM: Your first time here? The open mouth when you saw the Pharos Lighthouse was a giveaway.

KERIDES: It's enormous.

SHEM: It's not bad. It'll be even more impressive when the harbour's finally finished. They're extending it over there. See? By the fishing boats. That stone pillar slipping into the water. I thought that wasn't going in till tomorrow.

KERIDES: Can you see the library from here?

SHEM: No, it's over towards the Gate of the Sun. And you don't know where that is, so I wasted my time telling you.

KERIDES: Thank you anyway. My name's Kerides, by the way.

SHEM: (DISINTERESTED)  
Is it? Look over there. That's the palace. It's got its own harbour and everything.

KERIDES: It's beautiful.

SHEM: If you like that sort of thing. If you were asking about the library you must be... a poet?

KERIDES: No. But I like to hear stories.

SHEM: A physician then? I have this pain in my side. Agony, it is.

KERIDES: I'm not a physician. Though I do know something about medicines.

SHEM: You're not a philosopher, are you? Useless lot. What are they for?

KERIDES: I've studied with some philosophers but I'm not one of their number.

SHEM: What are you then? You're probably a stone-mason or something. Going to carve another song to our useless Pharaoh Ptolemy. He's not even Egyptian. He's Greek.



KERIDES: I'm Greek.

SHEM: Well... so you're nobody important?

KERIDES: No.

FX: BOAT BUMPS GENTLY AGAINST A PIER.

SHEM: You won't have anywhere to stay then?

KERIDES: No. I'll have to find somewhere.

SAILOR: Everybody ashore.

FX: RUMBLE OF MOVEMENT.

SHEM: Do you have money? You'll need money in Alexandria.

FX: JANGLE OF COINS IN A PURSE.

KERIDES: A little my master left me before...

FX: PURSE GRABBED. SCUFFLE AND RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: Hey. Come back. Stop him. He's stealing my money. Stop him...

FX: SCUFFLE OF CROWD - SHEM IS LONG GONE.

KERIDES: (TO HIMSELF)  
No, I don't have any money - now. Or a place to stay. I...

FX: A SLIGHT BUMP.

ADREA: Hey, watch where you're going.

KERIDES: I'm sorry. I was... I've no idea what I was doing. Or what I'm going to do. I've just been robbed.

ADREA: Really?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: Well, that's not my problem.

KERIDES: You're just going to walk away?

ADREA: No, I'm going to walk away very quickly. I have problems of my own. Well, actually they're my master's problems but Shofrek needs someone to sort them for him.

KERIDES: Master? So you're a...

ADREA: A what? A hippopotamus? Of course I'm a slave. Would I be out in the middle of the day being baked alive lugging a basket this heavy if I wasn't? Though why he's got me doing the fetching and carrying when he has half a dozen strong male slaves I don't know. One of the eunuchs could have done it - they've got nothing better to do.

KERIDES: I need to report to the harbour police that I've been robbed. Where will I find them?

ADREA: At this time of day, probably in the nearest tavern, taking the shade and a bellyful of ale. Don't waste your time with them. They couldn't find their noses with a map.

KERIDES: Oh.

ADREA: Right. I've wasted enough time with you. I've got work to do. I have to get this basket to my master at the Palace before I can get on with my usual work.

FX: FOOTSTEPS MOVING OFF.

ADREA: Shift. Move.

KERIDES: Oh, wait a moment. You dropped something.

FX: CLOTH PICKED UP.

KERIDES: You dropped a cloak. Wherever you are. Robbed and talked down to by a slave. Today can't get any worse.

MUSIC BRIDGE: SOMETHING SIMPLE. IN KEEPING WITH THE ERA.

FX: A DOOR SLAMMING.

KERIDES: But I can work for my room...  
(NO ANSWER, THEN TO HIMSELF)

Go to Alexandria, he said. It's the home of civilisation, he said. They'll welcome a thinker like you, he said.

(REAL DESPAIR)

Master Fayum, why did you abandon me to this place? Now, what was the name of your old mentor?

FX: RUSTLE OF PAPER.

MUSIC BRIDGE: LOCAL, GENTLY BRIDGING.

FX: DRUNKEN LEERING SOUNDS. A SLAP.

ADREA: Keep your hands to yourself or my master will hear of it.

FX: FOOTSTEPS HURRY ON THEN STOP. A KNOCK AT A DOOR.

ADREA: If you've gone back to the villa...

FX: DOOR OPENS.

SHOFREK: Ah, there you are at last, Adrea. Did you bring what I wanted?

ADREA: The basket was where you said it would be, sir.

SHOFREK: Of course. I'll be staying in the palace tonight. Affairs of state with old Salmar will keep me here. You find quarters with the palace slaves - I may need you to run an errand for me later.

ADREA: What of my work at the house, sir?

SHOFREK: Do as you're told, girl.

FX: DOOR CLOSES. FOOTSTEPS WALK AWAY.

ADREA: But you won't be happy when the house is a shambles.

MUSIC BRIDGE: SOFT BRIDGE - EGYPTIAN SOUNDING.

FX: SOUNDS OF A BRAZIER BURNING.

KERIDES: Yes, I know it's late but if you could tell Vizier Mentep that the apprentice of his student Fayum is here, I know he will see me. Or Shofrek. I have something of his.

GUARD: No. Seen enough beggars tonight.

KERIDES: May I warm myself by your brazier till morning? It's cold and I have nowhere to...

FX: DOOR SLAMS.

KERIDES: Does everyone in this city finish conversations by doors in

people's faces? Maybe I'll be lucky and freeze to death before morning.

FX: A WOODEN DOOR OPENS.

KERIDES: I'm going, I'm going.

GUARD: Shofrek, you say? He's got a soft spot for your sort. So has Mentep. I'd get my guts to play with if I turned one of their charities away. Get your bones in here.

KERIDES: Thank you. That's very kind. Now, where would I find Shofrek?

GUARD: Just move.

FX: FOOTSTEPS ON STONE AS HE HEADS OFF.

MUSIC BRIDGE: BRIEF BRIDGING PIECE.

FX: SNORING. LOUD, HOG-LIKE SNORING.

ADREA: How can you sleep through that?

FX: MORE SNORING.

ADREA: Just my luck to be sharing a room with the noisiest slave in the palace. It's like sharing rooms with a warthog. Will you shut up?

FX: MORE SNORING.

ADREA: I might well murder you before morning.

MUSIC BRIDGE: BRIEF BURST TO BRIDGE.

FX: KNOCK ON DOOR.

KERIDES: Hello? Hello?

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

KERIDES: Are these the rooms of Lord Shofrek?

FX: CRACKLE OF FIRE.

KERIDES: Fire! The rooms are on fi...

FX: A THUMP - A GROAN FROM KERIDES AND HE FALLS TO THE FLOOR. A STONE JAR IS

PUSHED OVER AND THE SOUND OF BURNING.

## **FIRST COMMERCIAL**

FX: SNORING. LOUD, HOG-LIKE SNORING.

ADREA: How can anyone sleep through that?

FX: MORE SNORING.

ADREA: I'm surprised they can't hear you in Greece!

FX: A HORN SOUNDS. AN ALARM HORN.

ADREA: Now what?

VOICE: (DISTANT)  
Fire! Fire in the guest apartments.

FX: BLANKET THROWN ASIDE.

ADREA: That's where my master is.

FX: SCAMPERING FOOTSTEPS - AND SNORING.

ADREA: How can you still be sleeping? Oh, never mind.

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: What's happening?

GUARD: A fire in Shofrek's guest quarters.

ADREA: Shofrek? That's my master.

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS TOWARDS BURNING.

ADREA: Master? Master Shofrek?

FX: SOUNDS OF BURNING.

ADREA: My master is in there. Do something!  
(NO ANSWER)  
Cowards. I'll do it myself.

FX: DOOR PUSHED OPEN INTO BURNING ROOM.

ADREA: Master? Master Shofrek?

FX: GROANING.

ADREA: Master?

FX: GROANING AND COUGHING.

ADREA: I'll help you up. This way.

KERIDES: Someone hit me.

ADREA: You? What are you doing here? And what are you doing with my master's cloak?

KERIDES: Ask me when we're not in a burning room.

ADREA: This way. Lean on me.

FX: MORE COUGHING.

KARNAK: Get water! Hurry! Douse the fire!

KERIDES: There's someone in there.

KARNAK: What?

KERIDES: There's someone in there. On the floor. I saw him before...

KARNAK: Did you see anyone, girl?

ADREA: Only him. I thought he was Master Shofrek.

KARNAK: We'll find out soon enough if it's your owner or not. They're bringing the blaze under control.

ADREA: I hope to the gods he's safe.

KARNAK: And you... what's your name?

KERIDES: Kerides.

KARNAK: Kerides. What were you doing in there?

KERIDES: Returning this cloak. She dropped it at the harbour earlier.

ADREA: She has a name, you know. Adrea.

KERIDES: All right. Adrea dropped it at the harbour.

ADREA: And it took you all that time to bring it here?

KERIDES: I had other things to do first.

KARNAK: Such as?

KERIDES: Try to find lodging.

KARNAK: Where are you staying?

KERIDES: I said 'try to find lodging'.

KARNAK: So you don't have anywhere to live.

KERIDES: Not yet... I'm sorry. I don't know your name.

KARNAK: Karnak. General Karnak. I'm in command of security in the Palace. You've probably heard of me.

KERIDES: I'm sorry. No.

ADREA: He's new. He'd just got off the boat. So today you've been robbed, caught in a fire and left without a place to stay.

KERIDES: And attacked. Someone in there hit me on the back of the head.

KARNAK: That's quite a day, though if I was suspicious I'd be wondering about a penniless vagrant who was found at heart of a blaze.

KERIDES: Are you suspicious?

KARNAK: Does the sun rise in the morning and set at night? It's my job to be suspicious.

MENTEP: (APPROACHING)

And you do it very well. One of your men tells me they've found a body, Karnak. Do you know what happened?

KARNAK: Not yet, but these two might have an answer.

ADREA: (QUICKLY)  
I'm not with him.

KARNAK: So what brings you to Alexandria... Kerides? What do you do?

KERIDES: I don't really know.

MENTEP: You don't know what you do? I imagine that makes doing it quite difficult.

KERIDES: I travelled with my teacher from the time I could walk. He took me in when my parents died. We travelled the world, learning what we could from the peoples we met. Medicine, engineering, philosophy... my master told me the best thing I could ever do was think.

KARNAK: So you're Kerides the Thinker. I'm quite sure we've got enough wasters like you already.

MENTEP: Karnak, Karnak, Karnak. What will we do with you?

KARNAK: Let me get on with my job? You still haven't told me why you're here, Kerides the Thinker.

KERIDES: Following my master's instructions. He told me to find Mentep. Apparently he is a man of importance in the palace.

MENTEP: Is he really?

KARNAK: I wouldn't say that.

MENTEP: Why would your master assume that a busy man like Mentep would meet you?

KERIDES: Because they were friends once. My master said Mentep was the wisest man he ever knew.

MENTEP: What was your teacher's name, boy?

KERIDES: Fayum. He was from an old, noble house.

MENTEP: And the finest student I ever had. A brilliant mind. You have completed your master's instructions. I am Vizier Mentep. Where is Fayum? I would very much like to see him.

KERIDES: I'm sorry, sir. Master Fayum died several months ago in the cold lands to the north.

MENTEP: Fayum...

KERIDES: It was quick. He didn't suffer.

MENTEP: What a waste. I had hoped he would return here one day. I



missed our discussions when he left.

KERIDES: He spoke fondly of those discussions. He said you and he didn't always agree. He said you both argued with passion. And great respect for each other.

MENTEP: I shall pray for him. First we must deal with this fire. What is your involvement?

KERIDES: None. I was just returning a cloak.

KARNAK: Or you're a penniless thief who took the chance to rob and murder a respected citizen.

MENTEP: I'm sure the boy didn't murder Shofrek.

KARNAK: You're soft, Mentep. Just because the lad's teacher was a friend of yours is no reason for you to...

MENTEP: (INTERRUPTING)  
No, but I would say the presence of the murder victim walking towards us puts the boy's guilt in question.

KARNAK: What?

SHOFREK: What in the name of the gods has happened here? I stepped out for a few moments...

KARNAK: Shofrek? We thought you were inside. The lad said he saw someone in there?

SHOFREK: What lad?

MENTEP: This young fellow was certain he saw a man inside your chambers.

SHOFREK: It must have been Salmar. He said he would visit this. We had business we had to finish. And a fine wine he had promised to share with me. He wasn't in there in the fire? Please tell me he's safe.

MENTEP: I'm sorry, Shofrek. A body was found in the ashes. Definitely a man. We thought it was you but it must have been Salmar.

SHOFREK: No. No, no. no.

ADREA: Master, can I bring you anything?

SHOFREK: Leave me.

ADREA: Master, I...

SHOFREK: I said leave me! Leave me alone!

FX: FOOTSTEPS HEAD AWAY.

MENTEP: He means nothing by it, girl. Salmar was his oldest friend.

ADREA: I understand, sir. Especially when he died so soon after my master's wife.

KERIDES: Did you say that Salmar was Shofrek's oldest friend?

MENTEP: Yes. Why?

KERIDES: Because the man I saw in Shofrek's rooms was barely older than me.

KARNAK: You must have been mistaken.

KERIDES: I'm sure he...

MENTEP: You saw him only for a second before you bumped your head.

KERIDES: I was struck on the head.

KARNAK: If you were, this is murder. More likely you were startled by the fire and just smacked your head.

KERIDES: It's true I didn't see anyone. Or hear them.

KARNAK: Neither did anyone else. But my men will investigate it.

MENTEP: You've had quite a day, young Kerides. Girl, show him to guest quarters and arrange food and drink for him. And get him something clean to wear.

ADREA: Yes, sir. This way.

FX: FOOTSTEPS HEAD AWAY.

KARNAK: So what do you think, Mentep?

MENTEP: I think it's late and old men like us should be asleep in our beds with our wives.

KARNAK: That's not what I meant and you know it. The fire.

MENTEP: Salmar had taken to drinking a good deal of late.

KARNAK: You think he was drunk and knocked over an oil lamp.

MENTEP: It seems likely.

KARNAK: Except that the young Thinker said the man in the room was young. But he could only have seen him for a moment, through a blaze and his head was still swimming. I don't know. We'll see in the morning. It's late.

MENTEP: And you have no intention of going to bed, have you?

KARNAK: You know me too well, old friend. Sleep well.

### MUSIC BRIDGE

### FX: SNORING, THEN DOOR OPENING.

KERIDES: Am I sleeping here?

ADREA: Certainly not. This is where I'm sleeping tonight - if I can get to sleep for that warthog snoring. How can she have slept through all the noise?

KERIDES: Who is she?

ADREA: Her name's Bessel. She does the fetching and carrying for the kitchens. Carries food and wine to whoever needs it. And her waist shows how much she pilfers for herself.

KERIDES: On our last trip to the north my master was told that you can stop a person snoring by turning them onto their side.

ADREA: Do you think you could shift that lump?

KERIDES: You have a point.

### FX: FLAP OF CLOTH.

ADREA: Right. I have my cloak. It's not decent for me to be running about in my night things.

KERIDES: Your night things? Oh. I should look away.

ADREA: It's a bit late for that.

KERIDES: I should give you back your master's cloak.

ADREA: It'll need washed. It must stink of smoke.

KERIDES: And perfume.

ADREA: No. My master's wife died a few months ago. He hasn't bothered with any scents since then. Losing his old friend will be too much for him to take.

KERIDES: Old. I'm sure he wasn't old. Do you know where the body will be taken?

ADREA: Of course. But I'm not taking you there. No. I'm not going there.  
No.

MUSIC BRIDGE: BRIEF BRIDGE.

FX: COLD, DANK FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: I can't believe I brought you here. There he is. On the stone table.

KERIDES: Give me that lamp. Would you get that one from over there, please?

ADREA: Everybody's giving me orders today.  
(BEAT)  
Same as every other day then. Got it.

KERIDES: Hold it up so I can see the body.

FX: DRY, CRACKING SOUND AND A FAINT SQUELCHING SOUND TOO.

ADREA: Oh, that's disgusting.

KERIDES: I've seen worse. On the shores of the great ocean my master and I found a man who had been in the water for weeks. He was bloated by the water and half eaten by fish. He...

ADREA: All right, all right. You've seen dead people before. I'd guess you haven't spent much time with girls though, if you think that's the way to interest us.

KERIDES: Not really, no. My teacher kept me busy with books.

ADREA: And you still liked him anyway?

KERIDES: Did you know Salmar? Have you seen him.

ADREA: Not like this - but he visited my master regularly.

KERIDES: And he was old?

ADREA: Over fifty - but he looked older. I blame that young wife of his.

KERIDES: What about his teeth?

ADREA: What about them?

KERIDES: Did he have many?

ADREA: At that age? He had some of his top teeth but the bottom ones were almost all gone.

KERIDES: Can you explain why his corpse has a full set of teeth?

ADREA: I... well... no. Can you explain it? You're the thinker.

KERIDES: Don't call me that, please. And there's only one explanation - this isn't Salmar.

ADREA: Which means Salmar is alive? So why hasn't he said anything? He lives in the palace.

KERIDES: That's a very good question.

ADREA: Just because I'm a slave it doesn't mean I'm stupid.

KERIDES: I never thought you were. When Salmar visits Shofrek at his home, does he come alone?

ADREA: No, he usually has his wife and some slaves with him. They have to put him to bed. He's been drinking too much since my master's wife died. They say seeing his friend so saddened by losing his wife broke Salmar's heart.

KERIDES: There are too many questions in my head, Adrea. Too many pieces of a puzzle that won't fit together.

ADREA: What are you wittering about?

KERIDES: I don't know. Shofrek's in charge of the harbour, isn't he? Can you take me to the place he was working today? The place he told you to collect his things from?

ADREA: At this time of night? If you order me to do it I'll have to do it.  
Are you ordering me?

KERIDES: Well, if you don't mind, I suppose. Please.

ADREA: That was the worst order anyone's ever given me.

KERIDES: Sorry. I haven't had any practice at it. When we get back, we should look into your master's rooms here before they clean up after the fire.

FX: FOOTSTEPS HEAD AWAY.

ADREA: What are you looking for anyway?

KERIDES: (FADING OUT OF RANGE)  
Well, it's hard to say...

FX: FOOTSTEPS GETTING CLOSER.

KARNAK: (TO HIMSELF)  
That's a very good question. What are you looking for, young Thinker?

## SECOND COMMERCIAL

FX: DOOR OPENS

ADREA: Do we really have to do this tonight, Kerides?

KERIDES: Adrea, once the damage from the fire is cleared away, we'll lose the truths this room can tell us.

ADREA: Can't the truths wait till morning? I'm exhausted. That trip to the harbour was a waste of time. And I got propositioned by sailors. Three times.

KERIDES: I think the last one was calling for me.

ADREA: Oh. That explains a lot. More than you do. If we'd been caught in my master's rooms at the harbour, we'd be in chains.

KERIDES: Do you see your basket? The one you brought earlier?

ADREA: It's over here. What do you want it for?

KERIDES: Something isn't making sense here.

ADREA: The body who wasn't Salmar?

KERIDES:  
make sense either.

That's the beginning of it. But there are other pieces that don't

ADREA: The scented body oils we found in Shofrek's office?

FX: CREAK OF THE DOOR.

SHOFREK: Are you on first name terms with your master now, girl?

ADREA: Master. No, I... I meant no disrespect.

SHOFREK: I should flay the skin from your back.

KERIDES: If there is fault here it is mine.

SHOFREK: I have energy enough to skin you as well, boy. And then perhaps you'll face Pharaoh's justice for setting the fire in the palace.

KERIDES: I didn't do that.

SHOFREK: You murdered my old friend, Salmar.

KERIDES: How could I murder him when he wasn't here tonight?

SHOFREK: What?

FX: FOOTSTEPS EMERGE.

KARNAK: That's a good question, young Thinker.

KERIDES: (YELPING)  
General Karnak! I didn't see you in the shadows.

KARNAK: That was the idea. You were saying that it wasn't Salmar who died here.

SHOFREK: Nonsense.

KARNAK: No, he's right.  
(A LITTLE SELF-CONSCIOUSLY)

The man who died here had a full set of teeth. Salmar lost most of his years ago.

SHOFREK: Then who was it?

KERIDES: When I arrived at the palace tonight, a guard told me he'd seen enough beggars for one night. I think it was one of those beggars who died here tonight.

KHOFREK: What would a beggar be doing in my rooms?

KERIDES: (UNCOMFORTABLE)  
Well... I...

FX: SHUFFLING FOOTSTEPS.

MENTEP: Speak up, Kerides. What would Fayum say to you? Have the courage of your beliefs.

ADREA: Don't look at me. You've got me in enough trouble already.

SHOFREK: Arrest them, General.

KARNAK: I might once I've heard what they have to say. Go on, boy.

KERIDES: Well, I think the beggar was brought here to make it look like Salmar died here tonight.

SHOFREK: Why would anyone do that?

KERIDES: To hide the fact that Salmar was actually murdered earlier in the day - probably last night or first thing this morning. I actually think I probably saw his body being hidden as I sailed in today. At the harbour - when a giant stone was being slid into place as part of the new wall, I think Salmar's body was underneath it.

SHOFREK: Are you drunk, boy?

KERIDES: Actually, no. I haven't had anything to eat or drink all day. I'm probably not as hungry as the beggar who was brought here. He must have thought the gods had taken him to their hearts when he saw the food here. He didn't know it would kill him.

ADREA: He was poisoned?

KERIDES: No. Just drugged. A potion to make him sleep. Think of the girl whose quarters you were sharing.

ADREA: She carried the food from the kitchen.

KERIDES: And always helped herself to whatever she could find.

ADREA: That's why she slept through the fire.



MENTEP: Do you know who set the fire, Kerides?

KERIDES: Well, yes. I, well... I... I think it was Shofrek.

SHOFREK: Enough of this. General, arrest them both and execute them. My dearest friend has been murdered and they try to blame me. They should be executed for the slander.

KERIDES: It took me some time to work out why you would murder your old friend. But Adrea laid the path for me and I didn't see it. Salmar took to drink after your wife died. Even the most loyal of friends wouldn't do that.

ADREA: Unless she was something more to him.  
(REALISES SHE'S SPOKEN OUT OF TURN)

ADREA: (CONTINUED./)  
Sorry. I didn't mean to...

KERIDES: (BEGINNING TO HIT HIS STRIDE - ONCE HE GETS STARTED THE IDEAS BEGIN TO FLOW FROM HIM AS HE PIECES IT ALL TOGETHER.) No, you're right. I think Salmar had been having an affair with Shofrek's wife - and Shofrek took this revenge on them. But I'm sure he has been having an affair of his own - with Salmar's wife. Perhaps as revenge. Perhaps they plotted this together. The scented oils and perfumes you had Adrea bring here were at odds with a man so deep in mourning. Why would you anoint yourself unless to see a woman? And then there is the cloak Adrea dropped. It smelled of perfume, but when you look at it you can see stains - blood stains. And a form of cement.

SHOFREK: What of it? I visit the worksite regularly. I am often covered with cuts and scrapes when I return home.

ADREA: That's true.

KARNAK: That's understandable - except that this isn't your cloak.

SHOFREK: Of course it is.

KARNAK: Can you see this design here, Master Mentep?

MENTEP: I can. My eyesight's not all it was. Wait a moment. Is that Aramaic?

KERIDES: It is. And can you read it?

MENTEP: Just about. This light isn't... oh. It's a blessing on the house of Salmar.

KERIDES: Exactly. The cloak was to be brought here to be burned along with the body. And the tools in the basket you had Adrea carry - there was blood on them, too. And blood in your rooms at the harbour. Salmar must have confronted you at the harbour. Was he going to expose you for killing your wife, his lover? You killed him, probably by accident. Then you weighed the body with stones and cement and put him in the water where the great stone pillar will cover him forever. That's why you ordered the pillar to be put in place a day early. But then you had to plan the fire to cover Salmar's disappearance.

SHOFREK: This is lunacy. The boy's made this up to cover that he killed Salmar. The girl must be his accomplice. No doubt they're having an affair or something.

KERIDES: I'm not having an affair with her. That's absurd.

ADREA: Of course it... Why? What's wrong with me?

KERIDES: What? Nothing. You're very pretty.

ADREA: Do you think so? Really?

KERIDES: Yes. I've never seen eyes so green before. They're beautiful.

ADREA: Oh...

(AS THOUGH SHE'S DESPERATE FOR SOMETHING TO  
COMPLAIN ABOUT - UNCOMFORTABLE WITH BEING SO  
PLEASED AT HIS COMPLIMENT.)

So it's absurd because I'm a slave?

KERIDES: What? No.

ADREA: Why then?

KERIDES: Because I just got here. I'm likely to be executed before dawn and we're arguing about a non-existent relationship? This is stupid.

ADREA: Don't call me stupid.

KERIDES: I didn't say you were stupid.

MENTEP: Karnak, are you sure they're not married?

SHOFREK: Enough of this. There's no proof to any of this nonsense.

KARNAK: You're right. It's interesting but still just a theory.

SHOFREK: Thank you. Now if you'll...

KARNAK: But as I say, it's an interesting theory. Very similar to some thoughts I'd had myself. So I had my men check on Salmar's movements yesterday - and they're also interrogating Salmar's wife. Or is that widow? Cassina? If she knows anything my lads will get it out of her. One way or another.

MENTEP: You look worried, Shofrek. Is there something you'd like to tell us?

SHOFREK: I... a real friend would never take his oldest friend's wife to his bed. No real friend would do that.

KARNAK: And divorce can be so messy - and embarrassing.

SHOFREK: Cassina knew nothing of this. I have proof here. In the basket.

FX: RUSTLE OF THE BASKET. A STOPPER PULLED. DRINKING.

KARNAK: Stop! What was in that bottle?

SHOFREK: A poison. In case the sleeping draught didn't work. At least I won't have the shame of a trial.

FX: RETCHING.

KARNAK: Damn him.

KERIDES: May I see the bottle?  
(HE SNIFFS)

I recognise the smell. A poison made from the bark of a tree and a small red berry.

SHOFREK: And there is no antidote.

KERIDES: True. But it loses the power to kill after being exposed to heat. You'll vomit for the rest of the night but apart from that you'll be fine.

SHOFREK: What?

KARNAK: At least until you're executed.  
(CALLING)  
Guards! Guards!

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

KARNAK: Throw this is the dungeon. And try to make sure he isn't sick on anyone important on the way.

MENTEP: Well done, Kerides. I can see why Fayum thought so highly of

you.

KERIDES: General Karnak had thought the same way.

MENTEP: (NOT BUYING A WORD)

Of course he did. When exactly did you send your men for Cassina?

KARNAK: As soon as I finish talking to you. Well, the boy's theory sounded fairly solid so I thought I'd see how Shofrek reacted. I've never liked him anyway.

MENTEP: And you call me a charlatan.

KARNAK: It worked, didn't it? I suppose I'll have to go and do all the papyruswork on this.

FX: WALKS A LITTLE.

KARNAK: Not bad, Thinker. Not bad. But leave it to me in future.

FX: WALKS AWAY, OUT OF ROOM.

MENTEP: He's impressed, Kerides. That was glowing praise from him.

KERIDES: What will happen now?

MENTEP: Shofrek will stand trial and be executed.

KERIDES: I mean to his property.

MENTEP: Oh, it'll be sold and the proceeds taken by Pharaoh. Ah, I see what you mean. I'm sure I can make the arrangements you need.  
(FADING INTO DISTANCE)

And we had better see about continuing your education, hadn't we? Now, tell me a little more of Fayum and his travels.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: BIG WOODEN DOOR OPENS. A COCK CROWS. RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: (ANGRY)  
Wait a minute, you.

KERIDES: Adrea. Mentep said he would sign the papers freeing you.

ADREA: He did. Was this your idea? You... you... you...

(AN EXASPERATED SCREAM)  
...You fish-brain!

KERIDES: Why are you so angry? You were a slave. Now you're free!

ADREA: You don't have to sound so happy about it! Until today I knew what I was doing. I had my duties, a place to sleep and more than enough food. I was doing fine and then you turn up and ruin it all. Did you bother asking if I wanted to be free?

KERIDES: Pardak of Crete said it is better to be a free pauper than a slave in gold chains.

ADREA: Then Pardak of Crete's a moron. And I bet he's never been hungry or without a roof over his head.

KERIDES: You'll find work.

ADREA: I had work, you cretin! I looked after my master! Nobody's going to pay me to do that when they can have a slave do it for nothing!  
(THOUGHTFUL)

Do you have money?

KERIDES: Mentep gave me some for solving this puzzle but I must find lodgings and...

ADREA: Then I'm staying with you.

KERIDES: But...

ADREA: It's your fault I'm on the street without a home. I'll earn my keep. I'll keep you fed and keep your lodgings clean.

KERIDES: But...

ADREA: Don't thank me. And don't try anything funny either. I didn't allow any of that even when I was a slave. Keep your hands to yourself.

KERIDES: I...

ADREA: Hurry up. Don't dawdle. We've got lodgings to find.

KERIDES: (TO HIMSELF)  
Welcome to Alexandria, Kerides.

# ALEXANDRIA 276 B.C.

## Notes

The first episode of any hopefully continuing show has a lot of work to do. It needs to introduce the characters, it needs to introduce the location, do at least some set-up of relationships and the style of the show... it has to do a lot. When you start thinking about the plot for an intro story it's like you have a shopping list. You have all these ingredients you have to fit in somehow to successfully tell the audience what kind of show it's going to be. But it still has to be worthwhile as a story in its own right.

The most important things for us with this first Kerides were:

- Introduce Kerides and Adrea.
- Give a hint of the potential relationship between Kerides and Adrea.
- Introduce the location – Hellenic Alexandria in 276BC.
- If possible introduce some of the supporting characters like Mentep, Karnak and Shem.
- Give Kerides a mystery – and the opportunity to show his deductive skills.
- Keep the dialogue quick and snappy. Every era has had slang. Just because it's historical doesn't mean it needs thous and dosto and willsts.

In general I think we hit this pretty well. We had always planned to have a wide range of characters, like Shem and Heptera. After a couple of episodes it became clear that Shem wasn't really necessary. He was going to be the way we got across information about Alexandria and its criminal classes. As it turned out, Karnak and Adrea were able to do that, so Shem would just be a bit of extra comic relief. I don't have a problem with comic relief characters, especially when they are played as well as Larry Albert played Shem, but if the regulars can deliver the laughs as well as the drama, I prefer to go with them. It develops their characters and I think the audience gets more out of it. So, sadly, it was farewell to Shem and Heptera.

Here's a plot we didn't use regarding Heptera. At one point, episode 7 or 8 was going to centre on Adrea being charged with Heptera's murder. Kerides would have realised that his feelings for Adrea were becoming very strong when he became aware that his concern for her was stopping him from doing his investigation properly. He was worried, distracted. In the end, we chose to go a different direction with things. However, we may bring Heptera back at some future point... to kill her off. We're like that – vicious.

## KERIDES THE THINKER

## TOO MUCH WINE

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2007

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and, in her own way, more than a match for Kerides. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan. Often about not being a slave anymore.

BELSER: A wine merchant, mid 40s. Successful and used to being obeyed.

VANA: Belser's daughter. Maybe 16 or 17, she's strong-willed but knows her father rules the roost.

MARNIS: Also 16 or 17 and the son of Belser's main business rival. Headstrong and with an eye for Vana.

SHEM: A rogue. A thief who robs Kerides - but who also has a thriving stall in the market. He's a shifty character but a useful informant. Late 20s, maybe early 30s.

GUARD: A comedy thick cop of his time.

STALL-HOLDER: A couple of lines.

HEPTERA: Landlady of Kerides and Adrea. She doesn't much like them - but they pay good money. She's convinced they're up to something. She's a prudish busybody. In her 40s.

ADREA: It's not very big, is it?

KERIDES: It's not bad.

ADREA: I've seen horses with more than this.

KERIDES: Well I like it.

ADREA: I didn't say I didn't like it. Just that it was small.

KERIDES: Smaller than you're used to.

ADREA: Well whose fault is that?

HEPTERA: Do you want it or not?

ADREA: It'll do, I suppose.

HEPTERA: You suppose?

KERIDES: Adrea, I didn't say...

ADREA: We'll take it. At half of the price you were asking. We could rent the palace for what you're asking. And this is no palace believe me.

HEPTERA: Cheek! You rent my best house and then run it down? And how would the likes of you know the palace anyway?

ADREA: Because I used to work there and he's very friendly with Vizier Mentep.

HEPTERA: Is he indeed?

ADREA: And with General Karnak. Aren't you, Kerides?

KERIDES: Well I've met them, Mentep was really a friend of my mentor, Fayum.

ADREA: He means 'yes'.

HEPTERA: I suppose that's why a young couple like you want a house this big. Entertaining and all that.

KERIDES: We're not a couple.

ADREA: Absolutely not.



HEPTERA:

You're not? What are you then? Her slave?

KERIDES: I'm not a slave.

ADREA: (DISGUSTED)

Neither am I anymore - and it's his fault.

KERIDES:

I don't know why you're so unhappy about being set free.

ADREA: Men!

(TO HEPTERA)

I'm going to cook for him and keep the house tidy.

HEPTERA: Is that all you'll be doing for him?

ADREA: (ICILLY)

Yes.

HEPTERA:

Good. Because I won't have hanky panky in any of my houses.  
I've been widowed three times and none of my husbands approved of that kind of thing.

ADREA: What did they die of? Boredom?

HEPTERA: What did...

KERIDES: (QUICKLY)

Yes, we'll take the house.

HEPTERA:

What? Oh. Then I want the first month in advance.

FX: JANGLE OF COINS.

HEPTERA: And remember. No...

ADREA:

Trust me, there won't be any hanky or any panky.

HEPTERA:

I'll be back later to see how you're settling in - and how  
you're treating the house.

KERIDES: Goodbye.

FX: DOOR CLOSES.

ADREA:

Good riddance. She'll be back to try to catch us in the act.

KERIDES: In the act of what?

ADREA: Give me strength!

KERIDES: Oh, that.

(EMBARRASSED, CHANGING THE SUBJECT)

When do we eat?

ADREA: Don't we have something to discuss first?

KERIDES: Do we?

ADREA: Money? As in, what I get paid, how much I have to keep the house every month.

KERIDES: Right. How much do you want?

ADREA: You haven't got a clue how much money is worth here, have you?

KERIDES: Not really, no. Well, not at all.

ADREA: Right. You need to learn.

KERIDES: Economics doesn't interest me.

ADREA: Who mentioned economics? This is shopping!

### MUSIC BRIDGE

### FX: BUZZ OF A BAZAAR.

KERIDES: Oh my... it's... incredible. In all my travels I've never seen a market like this.

ADREA: You should see it around feast days. It makes today look quiet.

KERIDES: It does?

ADREA: Oh yes. Right. First lesson. We're going to buy fruit. What do you do?

KERIDES: Ask for fruit?

ADREA: No. You examine the fruit. These apples for a start. Are they firm? Is the skin wrinkled? Are they ripe?

KERIDES: They're green.

ADREA: So?

KERIDES: So we don't want them?

ADREA: Right. What about these grapes?

KERIDES: How do I tell with them?

ADREA: Easy.

FX: MUNCHING.

ADREA: You try one. Not bad.

FX: ADREA SPITTING.

ADREA: Pity about the seeds though. How much for them?

STALLHOLDER: Best quality grapes. Five.

FX: JANGLE OF PURSE.

ADREA: If you pay him that I'll belt your ear.

KERIDES: Why?

ADREA: Because he's over-charging. Everybody in the market over-charges. You haggle him down first. I'll give you two.

STALL-HOLDER: I am not a charity. Four.

ADREA: Three, no more. And only if you throw in a couple of those apples - the fresh, red ones.

STALL-HOLDER: My children will starve. Very well.

ADREA: See? That's how it's done. You can carry the fruit.

KERIDES: Thanks. Where next?

SHEM: (FADING IN OVER THE NEXT FEW LINES AS AN APPARENT PART OF THE SOUNDSCAPE, GETTING LOUDER AS KERIDES AND ADREA MOVE TOWARDS HIM - THE ASTERISKS WILL SHOW WHERE THEY INTERSECT.).

These are genuine, my friends. Hand-crafted by Pharaoh's own artists. Anywhere else in the market these would cost you 20 each but I'm not here tomorrow so I have to get rid of them. You can have a pair of these finest carvings of Horus and Isis for just 10. That's not 10 each,

that's 10 the pair. I'm a fool to myself. I'm losing money on these, as the gods are my witness or my name's not Honest Shem.\*

ADREA: Meat Probably. You do eat meat, don't you? You're not one of these weird cultists who only eats plants.

SHEM: No, I eat meat. Well, most kinds. I was offered dog once. I didn't like it much.

ADREA: Don't imagine the dog did either.

KERIDES: Once, when I was in the north they ate...\*  
(MOMENT OF RECOGNITION)  
You!

SHEM: You?  
(CLICK! PENNY DROPS, CHANGING TONE)  
I mean, who are you? Never seen you before in my life.

KERIDES: Except yesterday when you stole my purse.

SHEM: Me steal? That's slander, that is. I'm as honest as the day is long.  
And... bye.

FX: SHEM RUNNING. SCUFFLE IN THE CROWD.

KERIDES: He did that yesterday as well.

ADREA: Well, don't be a coward. Get after him.

FX: MINOR SCUFFLE IN CROWD.

KERIDES: Excuse me. Excuse me.

ADREA: Useless.  
(LOUDLY)

Move! Get out of the way. That man's a thief. Get out of our way! Move!

FX: MORE OF A SCUFFLE.

ADREA: That's something else I have to teach you - not to be so polite all the time. Move! Shift!

KERIDES: There. I can still see him. Heading into the crowd.

ADREA: He's making for the west gate. I know a quick way. You keep

chasing him and I'll cut him off.

KERIDES: I...

ADREA: Good.

FX: SCUFFLES.

ADREA: (MOVING OFF)

Move. Shift. Out of the way. Move. Ooh. Sorry about that.  
Move! Here you come...

FX: MAJOR SCUFFLE. SOMEONE FALLS. SHEM YELLS.

ADREA: Got you.

KERIDES: Adrea.

ADREA: There you are. What kept you?

SHEM: Help! Help me! They're trying to kill an honest man!

BELSER: Do you know any honest men, Shem?

SHEM: What do you mean, Belser?

BELSER: I mean you're a rogue and a scoundrel, Shem, and everyone knows it.

SHEM: I'm honest. A poor merchant.

ADREA: Honest enough to have had your ear cut off, I see. What was that for?

SHEM: Sorry. Didn't hear the question.

ADREA: I bet. Give him his purse back.

SHEM: You were Shofrek's property, weren't you? I've seen you around. If you're looking for a new master I might be able to...

ADREA: Don't even think it. I'm free now. And it's over-rated.

SHEM: And you're with him now? Quick work.

ADREA: I'm not with... oh, I give up. And stop changing the subject. You stole Kerides' money yesterday. Give it back.

BELSER: I'm Belser. This is my wine shop. Why don't we call the guard and let him deal with Shem here?

KERIDES: That seems fair. I'm Kerides, by the way. And this is Adrea.

BELSER: A delight to meet you. Kumek, fetch a guard. And you stay where you are, Shem. Would you care for some wine while we wait? I like to pride myself on having the finest wines in all of Alexandria. Made with the finest grapes - a breed of seedless I imported from the north. I sent a cartload of my latest off to age in one of my caves just this morning - when it's done it'll grace the palace of Pharaoh himself.

KERIDES: I don't want to...

ADREA: (INTERRUPTING)  
Thank you. We'd love some.

MARNIS: (COMING CLOSER)  
Belser. Belser, I must speak to you.

BELSER: Oh, what does he want?

KERIDES: You know him?

BELSER: Marnis. I know his family. His father is also a wine merchant. Inferior stock from second rate grapes. And the same could be said of the family as a whole. Well, what do you want, boy?

MARNIS: I'm looking for my father.

BELSER: And you thought you'd find him here? You're as addled as he is.

MARNIS: But he was due to meet you at your winery.

BELSER: And he didn't show up. Now go away.

FX: CREAK OF DOOR.

VANA: Marnis? I thought it was you.

BELSER: Vana. You've been ill again. Go inside.

VANA: Why? I only want to talk to Marnis.

BELSER: Because I told you to go inside. And I told you both a year ago that you could never meet again. The only thing I agreed with your father on, boy.

MARNIS:  
so set against Vana and I.

My father has changed his thoughts on the matter. He is now not

VANA: BELSER: Well I am, so get out. And you go inside, Vana.  
No.

BELSER: Go inside now! Now, girl, or I'll take a belt to you.

VANA: It's unfair. You love this stupid wine more than you love your only  
daughter.

BELSER: The wine causes me less trouble. Now go inside.

VANA: I hate you! I hate you and I hate your stupid wine.

FX: SOUND OF GIANT WINE JARS BEING PUSHED OVER. THEY TOPPLE, SMASH, WINE  
POURS OUT.

BELSER: Get inside! And you, boy. You can go home and tell your father  
to learn some manners and attend meetings when he arranges them.

KERIDES: (TENTATIVELY)  
Belser...

BELSER: I'm sorry you have to see this. It's none of your worry.

KERIDES: That's not what concerns me. Your wine...

BELSER: She's cost me a fortune.

ADREA: No. He means look at the jars Vana toppled - the one nearest her.  
That looks like...

BELSER: Gods alive - a hand?

MARNIS: Is this what you put in your wine, Belser. When I tell my father  
this he'll...

VANA: He won't do anything, Marnis. I think it's your father in the jar.

### **FIRST COMMERCIAL**

MARNIS: Murderer! You killed my father.

BELSER: Don't be absurd.

MARNIS: Murderer! I'll kill you.

FX: KNIFE UNSHEATHED.

BELSER: Keep back, boy. Or join your father.

VANA: Father? Marnis, please. Stop this.

MARNIS: Father. Help me get him out of there.

KERIDES: Wait.

MARNIS: What?

KERIDES: A body can give us many clues to how it died, but they can be lost if it is moved.

MARNIS: That's not a body. He's my father.

VANA: Marnis, I am so sorry.

KERIDES: I know this will be difficult for you...

ADREA: Marnis. That's what she called him.

KERIDES: ...Yes, Marnis - we should leave your father until we can see if his body gives us any truth.

ADREA: And it won't be for long. A guard is already on his way for this...

SHEM: You don't need me here for this, do you? I'll just...

ADREA: Shut up and don't move, you.

MARNIS: Very well. I will see you executed for this, Belser.

BELSER: Don't be absurd. I didn't kill him.

MARNIS: How often did you threaten to do just? Vana? You heard him say it often enough.

PAUSE

BELSER: Vana? You don't believe him, do you?



VANA: I don't want to. But you did threaten to... no, I don't believe it. I don't want to believe it.

KERIDES: Adrea, come here a moment.

ADREA: What is it?

KERIDES: Look at his hands.

ADREA: Ugh. What a mess.

KERIDES: I wonder...

ADREA: Kerides, no.

KERIDES: Pardon?

ADREA: No.

KERIDES: What do you mean?

ADREA: I mean, no. You are not getting involved with another murder. You haven't even spent a full day in the city yet.

KERIDES: So?

ADREA: Well... I mean... two murders in one day? People will talk. They'll say you're cursed.

KERIDES: Really?

ADREA: Probably not. But they'll talk.

KERIDES: I don't care. Adrea, look at those two. How old are they?

ADREA: How should I know? Sixteen? Seventeen?

KERIDES: He has found his father dead, and her father is the likely suspect. Don't they deserve the truth?

ADREA: I suppose. But why can't you leave it to the guards?

KERIDES: Because guards see what's easiest and not always the truth. Please?

ADREA: Oh, all right. But I don't usually give in this easily - so don't get ideas about anything. What about his hands, then?

KERIDES: Look at them. What do you see?

ADREA: You were right. They're a mess. He must have been trying to break his way out of the jar. Or clawing at the stopper.

KERIDES: Possibly. Interesting. Look at his fingernails. You'd expect them to be broken or have splinters under them if he was trying to tear into the stopper.

ADREA: Actually, his fingers look fine - it's the backs of his hands near the wrists that are a mess. Why was he hitting anything like that? It doesn't make sense.

KERIDES: I know. Let's see what else he can tell us.

FX: BODY MOVED.

ADREA: He looks like a sack of clothes.

KERIDES: Most of his bones are broken.

GUARD: (APPROACHING)

All right. I hear there's been a murder. Levi the wine merchant. Step away you two. Leave the body alone. You vultures will have him soon enough.

MARNIS: Don't talk about my father like that.

GUARD: Oh. Sorry. Right, who are you two?

KERIDES: My name is Kerides.

ADREA: And I'm Adrea - which he forgot to mention - again!

GUARD: Well, Kerides and Adrea. This is a matter for the Guard so let us deal with it and you go... wait. Kerides? You weren't the one who helped General Karnak last night? At the palace?

ADREA: That was us.

GUARD: Well, if you work for the General, sir, you carry on.

KERIDES: I don't... I... very well.

ADREA: (QUIETLY)  
See? I told you. People know you already.

KERIDES: Yes, well. Oh.

ADREA: Now what? Oh.

MARNIS: What is it?

KERIDES: You probably shouldn't see this.

MARNIS: He's my father. Let me see.

BELSER: What is it?

MARNIS: As if you didn't know. You beat his skull in.

KERIDES: Not the skull - just a section at the back of the head.

ADREA: That's not helping him much, Kerides.

KERIDES: No. I suppose not. It's not helping me, either.

ADREA: How do you mean?

KERIDES: I mean, if he was struck to the back of the head, how did he hurt his hands so badly? I'm sure he couldn't have been awake enough to try to fight his way out of the jar. Especially with those broken bones.

ADREA: So he was hurt before he went into the jar.

KERIDES: Probably dead. You know, something's not right about him.

ADREA: You don't say. He looks the picture of health to me.

KERIDES: You know what I mean.

ADREA: No, I don't - I never know what you mean.

KERIDES: I mean, there's something about his clothes.

ADREA: Nice clothes - the maker's mark is embroidered on them - Lishil. He's not cheap. A good fit from what I can see. It'd be a nice outfit if it wasn't soaked in wine and covered with seeds and grape pulp.

KERIDES: (THOUGHTFUL)  
Yes, if it wasn't... why would there be grape pulp in the barrel? It must be filtered out, surely?

BELSER: Of course it is. I take pride in my wine.

ADREA: But he's covered with it.

SHEM: I'm just in the way here. I'll...

ADREA: Shem, sit down or I'll nail your knees to the ground.

KERIDES: She means it.

SHEM: I believe her.  
(QUIETLY)  
What a woman.

ADREA: Guard, keep an eye on him.

GUARD: Yes, miss.

KERIDES: Marnis, why did you come looking for your father here? He and Belser were rivals.

MARNIS: More than that. They hated each other.

BELSER: That's true.

MARNIS: Belser sent a message to my father, asking to meet him at his - Belser's - winery.

BELSER: I did no such thing. The meeting was Levi's idea. He sent me a note - and then he didn't show up.

VANA: I... nothing.

MARNIS: What is it, Vana?

VANA: (UNCOMFORTABLE)  
Really. Nothing.

MARNIS: Vana...

VANA: I said it's nothing.

KERIDES: (QUIETLY)  
Adrea, talk to her.

ADREA: Why me?

KERIDES: Because you're a woman. She'll listen to you.

ADREA: You don't know women, do you? Oh, all right.

(SOOTHING)

Vana, whatever it is, you can tell us.

VANA: (SOBBING)

I can't. I mustn't.

ADREA: Why not?

BELSER: Oh, for the love of all the gods, just speak girl.

VANA: All right. I saw Levi go into our winery.

BELSER: What?

MARNIS: When?

VANA: A little after the hour he was supposed to meet my father.

KERIDES: Belser?

BELSER: It's nonsense. I didn't see him.

VANA: But he went in. I saw him.

BELSER: I must have just missed him. I didn't wait long past the appointed time. I'm a busy man. I don't have time to waste.

MARNIS: You're sure it was my father?

VANA: (MISERABLY)

Yes. I was in the kitchen.

KERIDES: So the winery is at the back of the shop?

BELSER: Yes.

KERIDES: Can I see it?

BELSER: People are working there...

ADREA: Guard. If he wants to see the winery it'll be important.

GUARD: Yes, right. We'll have a look there, then.

BELSER: Very well.

ADREA: And that includes you, Shem.

SHEM: Oh... joy.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: SOUNDS OF WOOD CREAKING IN MACHINERY AND STONE JARS BEING ROLLED.

BELSER: Well, this is my winery. Can we hurry?

GUARD: Right. We'd better investigate. After you, sir.

KERIDES: Oh, yes. Thank you. Belser, how many people would have been working here when you were due to meet Levi?

BELSER: None. They were moving the shipment of wine I mentioned earlier.

KERIDES: So this place was empty. The wine jars are stored in the corner, grapes brought in... how?

BELSER: They're delivered by cart through the back. There's a gate at the back of our yard.

KERIDES: And this must be how the wine is made?

BELSER: It's how the grapes are pressed. They're tipped into the vat and the stone lid is lowered to crush them.

KERIDES: I see... And the vat is at least big enough to take a man.

BELSER: I suppose... wait. What are you saying?

KERIDES: The pulp on Levi's clothing. If wine is filtered, it means he had to have come into contact with the wine before that stage. And this is the only stage where the fruit is pulped.

ADREA: Kerides, don't move your foot.

KERIDES: What is it? It's not a snake, is it?

FX: A GENTLE WHACK. ADREA'S HIT HIM.

ADREA: Don't be so soft. No, it's this.

KERIDES: A ring?

MARNIS: Let me see that. It's my father's ring. He wore it everywhere.

GUARD: Which proves that Levi was here. At a time when the work premises were empty except for... you, Belser.

MARNIS: I knew it. You killed him.

BELSER: Of course I didn't.

GUARD: Come with me, Belser. The chief of the guard will want to interrogate you.

MARNIS: Murderer.

GUARD: Thank you for the help, Kerides.

ADREA: Can we get back to... Kerides, what is it?

KERIDES: This isn't right.

ADREA: You're right. Fathers shouldn't stop their children meeting this way.

SHEM: (SNORTING)  
Stop them?

ADREA: And what does that mean?

SHEM: Why should I tell you?

ADREA: Because the guard still wants to talk to you about stealing Kerides' money yesterday.

SHEM: Oh. Yes.

ADREA: So talk.

SHEM: Levi and Belser stopped Marnis and Vana meeting, right?

ADREA: Right.

SHEM: Wrong. They've been meeting here, at Levi's winery - and at various other places as well. Quite vigorously from what I saw - if you get my meaning.

ADREA: I get your meaning. You were watching them.

SHEM: Well... only a bit.

KERIDES:  
arrest the wrong man.

This is a terrible mistake. I think I've just helped that guard

## SECOND COMMERCIAL

ADREA: Kerides, what do you mean the guard arrested the wrong man?  
Everything points to...

KERIDES: (INTERRUPTING)  
To Belser being innocent.

ADREA: I don't see how. So what are you going to do?

KERIDES: I'm going to have a grape. And so are you.

SHEM: What about me?

ADREA: Shut up.

KERIDES: Here.

FX: MUNCHING.

ADREA: It's a nice grape. Very sweet.

KERIDES: Now spit out the seeds.

ADREA: Spit out the...  
(REALISATION)  
Oh...

KERIDES: Come on. We have to stop the guard.

SHEM: What? Will you tell me what's going on?

ADREA: You. Heel.

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: BAZAAR SOUNDS.

GUARD: This way, Belser.

VANA: I'm so sorry, Marnis.



MARNIS: It's not your fault.

BELSER: I didn't do it.

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: He's telling the truth.

GUARD: What?

KERIDES: Belser is telling the truth. He didn't kill Levi.

GUARD: We'll see.

KERIDES: The grapes prove he didn't do it.

MARNIS: What are you talking about?

KERIDES: I'm talking about the pulp and the seeds that are all over your father's corpse.

ADREA: They couldn't have come from Belser's grapes.

MARNIS: Why not?

KERIDES: Because Belser only uses seedless grapes. Which means your father was murdered at a different wine press. How many other presses in the city could take a man?

BELSER: Only one. Levi's own press.

KERIDES: Which is where he was murdered. If you check the kind of grapes he's covered with, you'll see they're the kind he used in his wine. Taste the pulp on the body – it will prove me correct.

ADREA: If you even think of tasting any of that pulp, Kerides, and I swear I'll be sick on you.

GUARD: So how did he get here?

KERIDES: He was brought here by his murderer - his son, Marnis.

MARNIS: Don't be stupid.

VANA: He's right. That's absurd.

ADREA: You would say that - you're as much part of it as he is.

KERIDES: I wondered, why would an intelligent man like Belser not get rid of the body when he could? If he was guilty, he had the chance to send the wine jar containing Levi out of the city this morning.

BELSER: My cart of wine.

KERIDES: Why would you leave it in front of your shop for anyone to find? The jar must have been put there through the night. Vana and Marnis have been meeting secretly for a year so they are experienced in sneaking around.

MARNIS: That's not true.

SHEM: It is. And I can name half a dozen people who'll say as much.

ADREA: Half a dozen? Were you selling tickets?

SHEM: Well...

ADREA: You were! Pervert!

KERIDES: Adrea?

ADREA: Sorry. Go on.

KERIDES: (VOICE GETS FASTER AS HE GETS INTO HIS STRIDE - RISING EXCITEMENT IN HIM)

Your fathers had forbidden you from meeting but you carried on meeting anyway. You resented what they had done. You came to hate them for it. So you decided to get rid of them - by making it seem as if one had killed the other, leaving you both free - and wealthy. Pharaoh's judge would almost certainly have given Belser's lands and possessions to you, Marnis. So last night you murdered your own father, and brought his body here. And then this morning, you came looking for him and Vana had her rehearsed tantrum, revealing the body. I assume she placed the ring in the winery to incriminate her father.

MARNIS: Be very careful, Greek. I don't take kindly to lies.

ADREA: And the guard don't take kindly to liars - which is why they'll ask why Vana lied, saying she had seen your father come here this morning - now that we know he was killed last night.

KERIDES: It can't have been later than that because your workers start

your press early.

SHEM: I told them that. See? I was useful.

KERIDES: The question in my mind, is why now? Why this particular time? And then a thought came to me. Vana had been sick.

ADREA: Again. In the morning? Anyone can work out what that means.

KERIDES: You needed your fathers out of the way before the pregnancy becomes obvious.

BELSER: Vana? Is this true? Are you with child?

ADREA: I'd speak up, Vana. It might make the difference between execution and prison. You might get lucky and be sold as a slave after a few years.

BELSER: Vana?

ADREA: Oh, just tell him. You can't get out of that stupid lie about seeing Levi. If they execute you, they kill your baby too.

VANA: What kind of life would a child have in prison?

BELSER: I'll raise the infant - it will be my grandchild. It will have a home with me.

MARNIS: Vana, they have no proof.

KERIDES: I think we have enough.

VANA: For my baby. Yes, it's true. All of it.

MARNIS: No!

GUARD: I thought it sounded like pig-swill myself. Still, I'd better take you both to the chief of the guard.

MARNIS: No!

FX: SCUFFLE - BOTH KERIDES AND ADREA YELP AS THEY CLATTER INTO JARS OF WINE TOPPLING THEM.

ADREA: Shem! Stop him.

SHEM: Well...

ADREA: Stop him and we'll forget yesterday.

SHEM: Right.

FX: SCUFFLE.

SHEM: Am I in your way?

MARNIS: Move. Get out of my way!

SHEM: Sorry. Here. Get off me! Stop shoving. No need to rush!

MARNIS: Move. Get out...

GUARD: Got you. There. That's your hands bound.

MARNIS: You idiot, Vana.

FX: SCUFFLE.

GUARD: Thanks again, sir. I'll take them away now.

ADREA: (POINTEDLY)  
Our pleasure!  
(GRUMBLING)  
You'd think I didn't do anything.

KERIDES: I know how important you are.

ADREA: (A LITTLE TOUCHED, A SLIGHT FRISSON)  
You do?

KERIDES: Yes. You're very special and...

SHEM: I'll just go now, shall I?

THE MOMENT IS BROKEN

ADREA: You... not yet, you!

SHEM: You said you'd...

ADREA: Forget yesterday? And we will - once you return his purse.

SHEM: Oh. I was forgetting. My memory's terrible these days.

ADREA: Yes, isn't it? The purse?

FX: JANGLE OF COINS THROWN AND CAUGHT.

ADREA: Now get lost.

SHEM: That's nice that is. Still, not to worry...

FX: JANGLE OF COINS.

ADREA: Where did he get that other purse?

KERIDES: He must have lifted it from Marnis when they scuffled.

ADREA: Well... Marnis deserved it.

BELSER: I should thank you - but my heart is too heavy. How could my daughter hate me so much?

FX: FOOTSTEPS. DOOR CLOSES.

KERIDES: Poor man.

ADREA: Yes. Come on, Let's go home.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: DOOR OPENS

ADREA: It's not the palace but it's home. And better than the prison cell Vana's baby will be born in.

KERIDES: I've never had a home before.

ADREA: (TOUCHED)  
Never? Well, you have one now.  
(SHAKING HERSELF)  
I should put this food away.

FX: FOOTSTEPS HEAD OFF, HER VOICE BECOMES DISTANT.

ADREA: And I'd better wash these clothes. We're both soaked with wine. Give me your kilt and tunic.

KERIDES: I don't have anything else to wear.

ADREA: Neither do I - that'll be what we buy tomorrow. If I wash what we have now they'll be dry by morning.

KERIDES: We can't sit around naked.

ADREA: We have towels. I'll get them while you get undressed.

FX: KERIDES PULLING OFF CLOTHES.

KERIDES: (NERVOUS)  
Just throw the towel in.

FX: DOOR OPENS.

HEPTERA: Well, how are you...

ADREA: (CALLING)  
Have you got your kilt off yet?

HEPTERA: What in the name of Horus is going on here?

ADREA: Who's that? Oh. Heptera.

HEPTERA: I knew it! I knew it! Naked and this house stinks of wine. It's a den of sin already!

KERIDES: Adrea, you explain this, will you?

## TOO MUCH WINE

### Notes

This script was written on a long train journey from Bristol to Dundee on a Monday following a brilliant weekend at the Regenerations Doctor Who convention in Swansea. Claire and I had worked out the plot before I went to the convention. I planned to give the script a couple of hours on the train and finish it later in the week. Getting on the train, I got lucky in getting a quiet seat for myself. I plugged the laptop in (don't you love that trains have sockets these days?) and started typing. Five hours later, the script was finished. I took another hour to polish it and it was emailed to Claire as soon as I got home. Probably the most productive train journey I've ever

had.

It was interesting to write on the move that way, with people coming and going around me. One woman sat next to me for a couple of hours and I was aware she was reading every word I typed. I had to work hard to resist putting in some really dirty words just to shock her. But hey, if you read over someone's shoulder, you deserve what you get.

This is the only story in which Adrea wasn't played by Sarah Schenckkan. Jennifer Lin took over for this one episode and performed admirably but I think the fact that Kerides has found an audience is largely down to the performances of Ulric and Sarah, along with the other regulars (and Larry Albert's always reliable direction). In many ways, Kerides is the least showy role in the scripts. Karnak and Mentep get to be grumpy or important in Egypt, or just get to be a comedy double act. Adrea is a force of nature, trying to hide insecurities behind a fast mouth and some pretty neat put-downs. Kerides, on the other hand, is the one who delivers all the expository dialogue. That he delivers the exposition without it sounding like an info-dump is a credit to Ulric's performance. That was something we talked about after we had written the eighth episode, Return of the Queen. We started to worry that Kerides was turning into the least developed character in the show where he was the hero, and we started planning how we would fix that and how we would develop his character. Having that long term plan plotted and the important points placed in his future timeline, made writing his character easier and also more interesting in subsequent stories.

# KERIDES THE THINKER

## MARK OF THE SERPENT

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 19<sup>th</sup> December 2007

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and, in her own way, more than a match for Kerides. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan. Often about not being a slave anymore.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II. He's old and widely respected. Anyone who takes his age for a sign of weakness makes a huge mistake. A very astute man.

SHADREK: Priest of Apophis, which is more of an ancient cult than an extant religion by 276BC. Not a very nice chap.



ADREA: You spent how much, Kerides?

KERIDES: Um... this much?

ADREA: On what? These useless scrolls?

KERIDES: I need these parchments for my studies, Adrea.

ADREA: Studies? What good are your studies if you don't have a roof over your head. More importantly if I don't have a roof over my head?

KERIDES: We're not that short of money. Well, not quite.

ADREA: What's this 'we'? I only work here. And you haven't paid me yet. That's...

FX: COINS.

KERIDES: As I was saying, yes I am that short of money.

ADREA: We'll be lucky if we don't wind up on the street. I was better off as a slave. And it's your fault I lost that easy life as well, I might add.

KERIDES: Your owner was a murderer!

ADREA: Well he wasn't murdering me so why should I care?

KERIDES: Because you do.

ADREA: What kind of answer is that?

MENTEP: (DISCRETE COUGH)  
I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

ADREA: What?

KERIDES: Vizier Mentep.

MENTEP: Just call me Mentep, my boy. Your door was open so I'm afraid I simply came in. Do forgive me.

KERIDES: Please. You are always welcome in my home.

ADREA: Whose home?

KERIDES: Our home. Ours. Our home.

ADREA: Nothing to do with me. I just work here.

KERIDES: (MUTTER)  
Sometimes...

ADREA: What was that?

KERIDES: Nothing. Please come in and sit, Mentep.

ADREA: (REMEMBERING HER MANNERS)  
Can I get you anything, sir? Wine perhaps?

MENTEP: No, thank you... Adrea, isn't it?

ADREA: Yes, sir.

MENTEP: And you don't have to call me 'sir'. You're not a slave anymore.

ADREA: Don't get me started on that.

MENTEP: But thank you for the offer of wine. That was most hospitable of you.

KERIDES: What brings you here?

MENTEP: Well, first of all, I wanted to see how you were getting on. I heard that you two had a house and a most unique landlady.

KERIDES: She's...

ADREA: A foul, nosey pot-bellied dwarf obsessed with sex. Mainly stopping people from having any.

KERIDES: She's convinced Adrea and I are, well, together.

MENTEP: And you're not? Pity.

ADREA: Pardon?

MENTEP: I have another reason to be in this part of the city. One of the council, Hamansheb, passed from this life through the night. As Vizier it falls on me to visit his family.

ADREA: He only has a wife and son. Well, here in Alexandria.

MENTEP: You knew him?

ADREA: Not really. I know one of his slaves. Nephris. We're good friends - we bump into each other in the market a lot. We sometimes have something to eat or a mug of beer. I like her. She's a nice girl. Lots of fun. A bit loose though, if you know what I mean.

KERIDES: (INTERESTED)  
Really?

ADREA: No, not really.  
(SOURLY)

Men! Nephris is probably worried about what she'll do next. I think I'll go and see her. I won't be long.

FX: DOOR CREAKS.

MENTEP: She has spirit, that one.

KERIDES: And she has a loud voice. Not to mention a foul temper. And amazing aim when she's throwing plates. And a memory that never fails except when it suits her.

MENTEP: She sounds like my wife. Don't lose her. Now, I really should make my way to Hamansheb's home and make my respects. Would you join me? I hate walking alone.

KERIDES: If you wish.

MENTEP: Now, I don't mean to pry, but did I hear the girl say you were short of money? We can deal with that, you know.

KERIDES: No. Thank you. I appreciate your kindness but I - well, we - have to make our own way.

MENTEP: Of course. Now give me a hand up.  
(RISES)

And on our little walk you can tell me what you're studying just now...

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: DOOR CREAKING OPEN.

ADREA: Nephris? Nephris? It's Adrea.

FX: FOOTSTEPS ENTER.

ADREA: Nephris?

SHADREK: (ROUGHLY)  
Who are you?

ADREA: (STARTLED)  
Where did you come from? What were you doing hiding in the shadows?

SHADREK: Mind your own business. What do you want with Nephris?

ADREA: You mind your own business.

SHADREK: Watch your tongue, girl. And answer me. What do you want with Nephris?

ADREA: She's my friend.

SHADREK: So you're a slave as well?

ADREA: I...

SHADREK: Well make yourself useful and carry those through into the reception rooms.

ADREA: I don't work here. Hang on. It doesn't look like anybody works here anymore.

SHADREK: People will be coming to pay respects to Hamansheb and they'll need refreshment. Now carry that wine through or feel my belt across your back.

ADREA: All right. Don't get excited.

FX: FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENS.

ADREA: What makes you think I'm a slave anyway?

SHADREK: Who else would be a slave's friend but another slave? And if you weren't a slave you would have come to the front of the house.

ADREA: You're as bad as Kerides.

SHADREK: What?

ADREA: Nothing.  
(A MOMENT)

Where is everyone? I can't see a single slave or servant.

SHADREK: They've gone.

ADREA: Gone where?

SHADREK: Put the wine in there.

ADREA: I said...

SHADREK: I heard. Now do as you're told and put the wine down.

ADREA: Have you seen Nephris?

SHADREK: Don't you ever stop asking stupid questions?

ADREA: Only when people don't answer them.

SHADREK: She's not here. None of them are.

ADREA: So who's tending to Hamansheb's widow? You?  
(BEAT)  
You're not, are you?

SHADREK: Don't be stupid. She's not here.

FX: SOUND OF HEAVY KNOCKER HITTING DOOR.

SHADREK: Stay quiet - and be ready to fetch refreshment for the guests.

FX: FOOTSTEPS. DOOR OPENS.

MENTEP: On behalf of Pharaoh's council I bring condolences to this house and hopes for a peaceful passing to the next life for its master.

SHADREK: Please enter, sir.

MENTEP: Thank you. May I offer my respects to the widow?

ADREA: You'll be lucky. Everybody's gone missing.

SHADREK: Quiet your mouth or I'll take the skin off your back.

KERIDES: Leave her alone.

SHADREK: She's only a slave.

MENTEP: Actually, she's quite free - and under the protection of my young friend here.

SHADREK: I had no idea. She didn't say...

ADREA: You were too busy threatening me to listen to anything I wanted to say.

SHADREK: I apologise to you, sirs.

ADREA: What about me?

SHADREK: Let me offer you wine. It's...

ADREA: Probably still in the cellar. I'll get it.

SHADREK: Stay where you are, girl. I'll get it.

MENTEP: You will stay here. Would you disgrace Hamansheb by abandoning his guests?

ADREA: Don't worry. I know where everything is in this place. I helped Nephris sometimes.

MENTEP: Let her fetch the wine, fellow, and tell me, where has the mistress of the house gone? Has she chosen to mourn privately?

SHADREK: I can't say, sir. I was not employed by Hamansheb or this house. We were simply acquainted.

MENTEP: Ah. I see.

ADREA: (DISTANT, CALLING)  
The cellar door is bolted. Kerides, give me a...never mind.  
I've got it.

SHADREK: You're a busy man, Vizier. If you would prefer to simply leave a message for Hamansheb's wife...

ADREA: (DISTANT, CALLING)  
Kerides!

KERIDES: She probably wants somebody to carry the wine for her.

ADREA: (DISTANT, CALLING, URGENT)  
KERIDES!

FX: RUNNING STEPS.

KERIDES: What is it? Can't you find the wine?

ADREA: I found the wine - and that's not all I found.

KERIDES: Who is that?

ADREA: It's Nephris - I think she's dead.

### **FIRST COMMERCIAL**

KERIDES: Adrea, don't move.

ADREA: I need to see if she's alive.

KERIDES: Stand still. Look in the shadows - near the smashed urn by her head.

ADREA: A serpent.

KERIDES: Don't alarm it. Just move slowly towards me.

SHADREK: What's going on?

KERIDES: There's a snake in the shadows.

FX: SHUFFLED FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: You're safe now, Adrea.

ADREA: Kill it. Kill it!

SHADREK: No. I'll get it.

(QUIETLY, SOFTLY TO SNAKE.)

Now then, my pretty. You're all right. No-one will try to hurt you. You're safe.

FX: HISS OF SNAKE.

SHADREK: Pass me that empty corn sack. Slowly.

KERIDES: Here.

SHADREK: All right, pretty one. Into the sack. You'll be safe in there.

FX: HISS OF SNAKE, SOUND OF CLOTH BAG CLOSING.

MENTEP: You handle the serpent with great skill.

SHADREK: I've had some experience with them.

KERIDES: I am so sorry about your friend, Adrea.

ADREA: Don't be sorry. Call a guard. The door was bolted. She was locked in here with a snake.

SHADREK: Why would a guard be interested? She was only a slave. The master of the house is dead - that's all that matters. Let me show you out, sir.

MENTEP: Oh. Very well.

FX: FOOTSTEPS ON STONE.

ADREA: (URGENT)  
Kerides, do something.

KERIDES: What can I do, Adrea?

ADREA: Find out exactly what happened to her. Why was she locked in a cellar with a snake?

KERIDES: It could have been an accident. Snakes are common in Egypt.

ADREA: And Nephris was terrified of them all. And where have all the other slaves gone? And Hamansheb's widow? Doesn't that seem odd to you?

KERIDES: Well, yes. But...

ADREA: I have never asked you for anything, Kerides.

KERIDES: No, usually you just tell me what to do.

ADREA: Don't make fun of me! You've uncovered the truth behind to murders since you arrived in Alexandria. I didn't want you to get involved with either of them but now I am asking you to find the truth here. Please.

KERIDES: All right. For you. Master Mentep...

MENTEP: Yes, Kerides?

KERIDES: The dead girl should be buried properly.

MENTEP: That's generous of you, Kerides but she was only a slave.

KERIDES: Not to Adrea.



MENTEP: Very well. What do you want?

KERIDES: Turn her body over to Adrea and myself and we will have her buried with dignity.

SHADREK: No. She was Hamansheb's property.

MENTEP: And since Hamansheb is dead and his wife unavailable, I must make the decision for them. The girl will be taken to the Necropolis, Kerides. And the palace will pay all expenses for her burial.

KERIDES: Thank you. I am in your debt.

MENTEP: Never that, my boy. Now, you fellow. Show me the way out.

SHADREK: Sir.

KERIDES: Adrea, pick up some pieces of that broken jar. Quickly.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: FLAMING TORCH.

ADREA: I hate these places. Cold. You can almost feel the spirits of the dead moving around you. They're restless until they are buried properly.

KERIDES: Let me see the body.

ADREA: Nephris. Her name is - was - Nephris.

KERIDES: Hand me that torch, would you? And you might prefer not to see this.

ADREA: I'll stay. Here.

FX: BURNING TORCH HANDED OVER. SOUNDS OF CLOTHING BEING MOVED ABOUT AS THE BODY IS EXAMINED.

KERIDES: She's cold, so she has been dead for some time. Her lips are dark, discoloured.

ADREA: Is that a sign of the venom?

KERIDES: Perhaps. My mentor, Fayum, always told me to find all the facts before making any assumptions. Her jaw is rigid.

ADREA: You've told me bodies do go stiff after death.

KERIDES: Only for a time - and her limbs can be moved quite freely.  
Odd...

FX: CLOTH MOVED.

KERIDES: There. The marks of a serpent's bite on her arm.

ADREA: So she did die from a snake bite.

KERIDES: So it seems. But how did the serpent reach her arm? The snake we saw was little longer than my arm. How could it reach so high?

ADREA: Perhaps she was kneeling?

KERIDES: Possibly. The broken jar it sheltered behind. Hand me the pieces would you?

ADREA: Here.

KERIDES: It's very elaborately decorated. Do you recognise any of the symbols?

ADREA: No. What are they?

KERIDES: I don't know. But there are a lot of snakes on the jar. Actually, I think I do recognise some of the symbols. I've seen them somewhere. When I was young and travelling with Fayum. I just can't remember exactly where... wait... it was when we visited Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt. I saw them there.

(THOUGHTFUL)

Did Nephris wear jewellery? Bracelets on her wrists or ankles, perhaps?

ADREA: She was a slave. How many slaves wear jewellery?

KERIDES: I can't say. You're the only slave I've ever really known.

ADREA: Then take it from me that slaves don't wear jewelry. Unless you're offering to buy me some. Why do you ask?

KERIDES: She - Nephris - has markings on her wrists and ankles. I'll need another torch.

FX: MORE FLICKERING FIRE.

ADREA: It's bruises. Around her ankles and wrists.

KERIDES: Not just bruising. There are cuts where a sharp end has dug in - there on the wrist and there, two places on her right ankle. These aren't from bracelets. She was chained up.

ADREA: Chained? Hamansheb would never do that. He was too busy with his religion to pay much attention to his slaves.

KERIDES: What's this?

ADREA: Looks like another cut.

KERIDES: But it's not from the chains. It's too neat. It looks like it was done with a knife.

ADREA: There's another one on her arm. Kerides. The way the cut sort of weaves. It's like...

KERIDES: It's like a snake. You can see where the blood was wiped away. Yes, wiped away with her dress.

ADREA: So?

KERIDES: That means the cuts were made while she was alive and not done afterwards.

ADREA: Is it some sort of torture?

KERIDES: Or perhaps a brand of some kind. Think about it. She was bitten by a snake, the jar had snakes all over it and she was marked with these snake brands.

ADREA: That's too much to be a coincidence. This wasn't an accident, Kerides. She was murdered.

KERIDES: If we tell Mentep...

ADREA: He'll do nothing. You heard him - Nephris was only a slave.

KERIDES: He didn't mean it that way.

ADREA: That's exactly how he meant it. Slaves don't count, Kerides. Some of us are happy but we're just objects. They'd investigate an ox's death but not a slave. We're worth less than the cattle.

KERIDES: You're not a slave, Adrea. You're worth as much as anyone in Egypt.

ADREA: They won't do anything about this, Kerides. You can find out who killed her. I know you can. I'll beg you if I have to.

KERIDES: You don't have to beg. But I will find out who killed her. Because you are my friend.

ADREA: Thank you.

KERIDES: You don't have to thank me either. You said Hamansheb was a religious man.

ADREA: Yes.

KERIDES: And Mentep said Hamansheb was a traditionalist, he stuck to the old ways. Come on. We're going outside the city.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: WIND BLOWING.

ADREA: I wish I'd gone home for my cloak. This wind is freezing.

KERIDES: Here. There's room in mine.

FX: FLAP OF CLOAK AS SHE HUDDLES IN.

ADREA: That's better. As long as nobody sees us. I don't want them getting ideas. And I don't want you getting ideas either. Keep your hands where I can see them. Not that we'll see anybody this far outside of the city. Do you have any idea where we're going?

KERIDES: I think so. Yes, there. Just a little ahead.

ADREA: That hole in the ground? We came all the way out here - with the sun going down - to look at a pit? You haven't got a clue about girls, have you?

KERIDES: There should be a way down into the pit somewhere. When we go down, keep your eye out for snakes.

ADREA: What?

KERIDES: There. There are steps cut round the outside of the pit.

ADREA: What did you mean snakes?

FX: FOOTSTEPS ON STONE STEPS.

KERIDES: Many of the old religions are still practiced in Egypt, even if they're not really recognised anymore.

ADREA: So?

KERIDES: I heard about a snake handler who lives out here, who still worships Apophis, the snake god. He might be able to explain something to me.

ADREA: Kerides, this pit is full of snakes. Horrible, wriggling snakes...

KERIDES: It's all right. The sun is disappearing so they will be ready to sleep.

ADREA: Have you told the snakes that?

KERIDES: I've worked out what has been bothering me about the snake that bit Nephris.

ADREA: That's not the one that's worrying me just now.  
(SHOOING, KICKING SAND.)  
Go away. Go on.

KERIDES: The snake you found in the cellar. What did it look like?

ADREA: It was an ugly thing. It looked like a string of walnuts.

KERIDES: I'm a fool, Adrea. My brain didn't make the connection at the time.

ADREA: What are you talking about? And that's a question I'm asking you far too often, by the way.

KERIDES: The snake that bit Nephris is a Zamenis snake.

ADREA: So?

KERIDES: So the Zamenis snake is harmless. Its bite isn't poisonous.

ADREA: Are you sure?

KERIDES: Yes. I'm certain of it.

ADREA: So how did she die?

SHADREK: That's a good question, slave-girl.

ADREA: Shadrek?

SHADREK: Well, pretty-boy? Do you have an answer for your girlie?

KERIDES: I...

## SECOND COMMERCIAL

SHADREK: Well?

ADREA: Kerides? Do you know what happened?

KERIDES: I'm sorry, Adrea.

SHADREK: Not as clever as you think you are, are you?

KERIDES: As I was saying, I'm sorry, Adrea but I know exactly how Nephris died and who killed her.

SHADREK: What?

ADREA: Tell me, Kerides. Who did it? Was it this... jackal?

SHADREK: Quiet your mouth, girl or I will.

KERIDES: No you won't. You won't threaten her again.

SHADREK: Brave little pup, trying to impress his girlie.

ADREA: Shut up. Kerides, who killed Nephris?

KERIDES: I'm sorry, Adrea. Nephris was killed... by Nephris.

ADREA: What?

KERIDES: And you already know that, Shadrek. I thought it would be you we found here.

SHADREK: You're out of your mind, boy.

KERIDES: I don't think so. You see, once the facts are all there, you simply have to put them into order to see the truth. The heart of this is Hamansheb's religion. The old ways, the old religion. When he died, he would be interred in a tomb, just as the Pharaohs did long ago. He would take his possessions with him into the next life. His gold, jewels, his fine wines - and his wife and his slaves.

SHADREK: Rubbish.

KERIDES: Is it? Hamansheb's widow wouldn't leave the city so soon after her husband's death, unless she was fleeing for her life. But if she fled, why did Nephris kill herself? I think you and Hamansheb worshipped the same god, Apophis, the snake god - a god of chaos and death.

SHADREK: Give respect to Apophis, boy. You are in his temple.

ADREA: Looks more like a stinking hole in the ground to me. Or is that as much of a temple as he's worth?

SHADREK: You've been warned, girl.

KERIDES: I think you and Hamansheb had an agreement, that when he died, you would gather his possessions - including his wife and slaves - to be buried with him. You have them chained somewhere - the chain marks on Nephris tell us that. You came back to his house to gather more of his possessions and brought Nephris with you to do the carrying. Did you threaten her? Threaten to kill her mistress and her fellow slaves if she ran to the guard?

SHADREK: You should be a story-teller.

KERIDES: (GETTING INTO HIS FLOW)

But she was braver than you expected. Probably braver than she thought she could be. Because she knew she was going to die. She knew that she had no hope. But she worked out a way of perhaps saving the others you hold - by taking her own life. Even though she was terrified of snakes, she smuggled one back to the house. In the cellar, she cut the image of snakes into her own flesh and then smashed one of Hamansheb's pots - one with snakes on it. Finally, she held the serpent to her arm and had it bite her. She couldn't have known that she had chosen a snake that wasn't poisonous. But when the bite had no effect, she found poison - she would have known where to find it in the cellar - and this time she did take her own life. She must have had incredible courage to do that. She committed suicide twice to save people she loved. And she left snake clues that would lead an investigator to you.

ADREA: She didn't know that nobody would care about a dead slave.

KERIDES: Nobody except you.

ADREA: She was my friend.

SHADREK: An interesting story but you have no proof. And all I was doing at Hamansheb's house was paying my respects at the home of a fellow worshipper.

KERIDES:                               Where would Nephris have found a snake? She and the others were held somewhere in this pit of yours. I am told the tunnels stretch a long way underground. When we find the other slaves and Hamansheb's widow, they will give us the proof.

SHADREK:                               You're not going looking for anything. I have my priests here.

KERIDES:                               Do they need those daggers to pray with?

FX: SHUFFLE OF FEET, GRUMBLE OF LOW VOICES PRAYING.

SHADREK:                               Only for making sacrifices. And you're all alone. Just you and your little girlie.

ADREA:                                I'm not his little girlie.

SHADREK:                               Be quiet or I'll feed you to the snakes.

ADREA:                                All right. I'm his little girlie.

KERIDES:                               I told you not to threaten her again, Shadrek.

SHADREK:                               You're a brave one. Do you think you can protect her all by yourself? Against all of us?

ADREA:                                If you get me killed here I will come back and haunt you, Kerides.

KERIDES:                               I won't fight you, Shadrek. Mentep! Mentep!

ADREA:                                This is your brilliant plan? Shouting for help?

SHADREK:                               That old fool's safely tucked up in bed. There's nobody to hear you scream. You or the girl.

KERIDES:                               You won't hurt her. On my life you won't.

SHADREK:                               You've got guts, I'll say that - and soon they'll be spilled in the sand.

KERIDES:                               Adrea, get behind me.

ADREA:                                I'm already behind you, idiot.

KERIDES:                               Oh.



SHADREK: I'm going to enjoy this.

MENTEP: (FROM ABOVE)

Is this your way, Shadrek? Ten armed men against two unarmed youngsters? Archers, if Shadrek moves, kill him.

FX: BOWS PULLED TAUT.

KERIDES: Have you been there long?

MENTEP: Since before you arrived. Your message was clear that we should hurry.

ADREA: You didn't tell me about any message!

KERIDES: Didn't I? Oh, sorry.

MENTEP: The palace guard are gifted at concealing themselves. And may I say you made a most handsome couple huddling together in your cloak?

ADREA: It's going to be all over the city by tomorrow. You know what soldiers are like. Everybody's going to know we were... huddling.

MENTEP: Join me up here. Let the guard clear this up. You've done enough.

MUSIC BRIDGE

FX: LARGE STONE BEING PUSHED INTO PLACE.

SHADREK: (SCREAMING BUT MUFFLED)

No! NOOO! LET ME OUT! YOU CAN'T DO THIS...

FX: LARGE STONE GOES INTO PLACE WITH A SOLID SOUND, CUTTING OFF THE SCREAMS.

MENTEP: A fitting punishment for his crime. Buried alive alongside Hamansheb.

KERIDES: Better him than Hamansheb's entire household. If Nephris hadn't given her life we would never have found Hamansheb's wife and slaves in time.

ADREA: She saved them all. But this is better than he deserves.

KERIDES: Hamansheb's wife was so angry she took all of the gold and jewels her husband had put in his tomb in preparation for the afterlife and she sold them all.

MENTEP: I heard. I saw her this morning - and she asked me to tell you that she will be sending a considerable sum of money to you as a token of her gratitude.

KERIDES: No. We couldn't...

ADREA: Yes, we could. We accept.

KERIDES: We didn't help her for money.

ADREA: And we're not going to insult her by turning it down. Besides, we're in no position to turn down money. I like to eat regularly and I'm partial to having a roof over my head.

MENTEP: You're not going to win, Kerides. Accept it.

KERIDES: Oh, all right.

MENTEP: The funeral rites for the slave girl - Nephris – are tomorrow, I believe. May I attend?

KERIDES: Adrea?

ADREA: You'll be welcome.

MENTEP: General Karnak will be with me, as will a few of the council. We would all like to give our respects to such a brave soul.

ADREA: Thank you.

MENTEP: Until tomorrow.

FX: OLD FEET SHUFFLE OFF.

ADREA: I didn't think Nephris could be so brave. She never took anything seriously. She loved her life as it was. She loved being in that house. She was happy being a slave.

KERIDES: So were you once.

ADREA: If I had died when I was a slave, would anyone have looked for justice for me?

KERIDES: You never have to find out now. You're free.

ADREA: And I still don't think that's all it's made out to be.  
(BEAT)

But it'll do for today. I'd really like to go home now.

KERIDES:           You're free. You can do what you want.

ADREA:           Really? Give me your cloak then.

KERIDES:           What?

ADREA:           It's cold. Hand it over.

FX: A SCUFFLE. GENTLE BUT STILL A SLIGHT SCUFFLE.

KERIDES:           Stop. Let go.

ADREA:                           Oh, all right. We can share it. But no huddling.

FX: FOOTSTEPS FADING INTO DISTANCE.

KERIDES:           All right, no huddling.

ADREA:                           Well, maybe a little. But only today. We won't be making a habit of it. People will talk. I have my reputation...

KERIDES:           Let's go home.

# MARK OF THE SERPENT

## Notes

Episode 3 was when we decided to start progressing Adrea's character a little. In the first couple of episodes she had largely been there so that Kerides had someone to talk to. In radio and audio plays, when characters are alone it gets difficult to convincingly get across what they're thinking and doing without resorting to them talking to themselves or a narration. Adrea got an introduction and sparky dialogue in the first two episodes but The Mark of the Serpent was where we really started to flesh her out, and get into detailing her as a character. We wanted to look into her background a bit, to explore her life as a slave. Had she had friends? Did she know other slaves? Was she really as callous as she sometimes appeared? If we made the story about her friend we would be able to get past the sarcasm and bluster and we'd see that she really does care about people. Adrea's abrasive shell is a defence against the harshness she faced as a slave. This was where we started to see past that, and where we started to really adore the idea of Kerides and Adrea as a couple.

We got a bit of really positive feedback on this one, relayed through director, Larry Albert. A colleague in the radio industry had got in touch to say he had enjoyed the show and hadn't seen the ending coming at all. It's always a good sign if you take a colleague by surprise with what you write.

It may be a good time to point out that neither Claire nor I are fond of snakes. Not even a little bit. When we were wondering which part of ancient Egyptian to use for a villainous cult, snakes were our first stop.

KERIDES THE THINKER

DEATH OF A THOUSAND PAPER CUTS

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 9<sup>th</sup> November 2008

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and, in her own way, more than a match for Kerides. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan. Often about not being a slave anymore.

KARNAK: General in Pharaoh's army and head of Palace security. More of a policeman than army. Very astute though he pretends just to be a soldier.

POLATES: Chief librarian at the great library of Alexandria. Of an old family and a somewhat self-important. 40s.

TARAMEK: A friend of Polates and one who spends a good deal of time at the library. 40s-50s.

LYSENIA: A progressive thinker (possibly father of Eratosthenes, not that it matters) and a bit of a genius. 30s.

TEBIAN: A traditionalist, enjoys a good-going argument. 30s

ADREA: Kerides, you said we were having a day out.

KERIDES: We are, Adrea.

ADREA: You call this a day out?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: Okay, so today is a day and we are actually out of the house but apart from that, how does a visit to some library count as a day out?

KERIDES: What were you expecting?

ADREA: You're the great thinker, work it out. It's very sunny and hot outside. I have a basket of food. I also have a jar of lotion to stop my skin burning. I'm wearing my prettiest sandals - not that you noticed - and if you paid me more I could afford an even better pair.

KERIDES: I like those. They suit you. Their colour really suits your skin

and shows how slim your ankles are.

ADREA: (AS EVER, FLUSTERED BY COMPLIMENTS)

Really? I just found them in the market. They're nothing special...

(BEAT)

What were you doing looking at my ankles?

KERIDES: Nothing. I wasn't looking. I just... I give up. I can't win.

ADREA: That's the smartest thing you've said all day. Now, since you totally failed to work it out - why they call you The Thinker I don't know - I thought we were going for a picnic.

KERIDES: Oh. A picnic.

ADREA: A picnic.

KERIDES: And I brought you to the library instead.

ADREA: A stuffy, dull, cold, boring library full of stuffy, dull, cold, boring people.

KERIDES: You're a little disappointed, aren't you?

ADREA: You catch on quick.

KERIDES: I'm sorry. But this could be fun, too. Look at all these papers and rolls of parchment. This is the greatest library in the world. Scholars from all over the world come here to learn and to discuss science and philosophy.

ADREA: You think this is where to bring a girl? That's why you've never kissed a girl.

KERIDES: Who says I've never kissed a girl?

ADREA: Have you? Who was it? I bet it was that Hanek from the tavern. Her family's got a history of this kind of thing. The stories I could tell about her sister. When I see her...

KERIDES: Adrea, this isn't the place for us to discuss this.

POLATES: Indeed not. This library is a place of learning, not a place for common street dregs to discuss their tawdry affairs.

ADREA: We're not having an affair - not even a tawdry one. Who are you anyway?

POLATES:  
should leave.

I am Polates, scholar and head librarian. I think you two

ADREA: Suits me.

KERIDES: But we're here to see these texts. The works of Shemek concerning the year of three kings and the mystery of Pharaoh Erimem.

POLATES: Really? And why would someone like you possibly be interested in those?

KERIDES: Because Vizier Mentep suggested that I read them.

ADREA: His good friend, Vizier Mentep. Actually, he's more like a patron.

POLATES: Vizier Mentep? Knows you?

KERIDES: Oh, yes. He's been very kind.

ADREA: He drops by regularly to see how we are.

KERIDES: I wouldn't say regularly.

ADREA: Twice this week already and three days last week. That's pretty regular.

KERIDES: I suppose it is. But he was passing anyway, so...

POLATES: All right. You are friends of the vizier. In that case you may see the papers you ask for. This way.

KERIDES: If you just tell us where they are we'll find them.

POLATES: This library is made of hundreds of chambers and has hundreds of thousands of irreplaceable pieces of parchment. They're carefully catalogued and I plan to keep them that way. I'm not letting you rummage for them. It may mean that I'll get more papyrus-cuts but it's better that than leaving you to throw everything around the place.

KERIDES: We wouldn't do that.

ADREA: Do you get a lot of cuts from the papyrus?

POLATES: Dozens every day.

ADREA: Good. Now where are those documents Kerides is to see?

POLATES: Who do you think you're...

ADREA: The documents Vizier Mentep told him to look at. That's Pharaoh's Vizier. Pharaoh. You have heard of Pharaoh?

POLATES: I... oh, very well. This way.

FX: FOOTSTEPS HEAD AWAY.

POLATES: (GRUMBLING)  
They let anyone in here these days.

KERIDES: Adrea, what are you doing?

ADREA: Getting you to see those stupid parchments you want to see so much.

KERIDES: I thought you'd be happy if he told us to leave.

ADREA: I don't mind being thrown out of places. You get used to it when you're a slave. I just object to the way he was throwing us out. Besides, if you're in here you can't be kissing that... that... Hanek. Now let's get after him or we'll lose him and I'm not spending all day in here looking for him.

MUSIC: SLIGHT BRIDGE

LYSENIA: Idiot.

TEBIAN: Liar.

LYSENIA: You blinkered fool, Tebian.

TEBIAN: Better than a dreaming charlatan like you, Lysenia.

LYSENIA: You cannot hide from the truth in your old ways.

TEBIAN: I find the truth in these old ways.

LYSENIA: I tell you the world must have a curve to it.

TEBIAN: Then why don't we roll down it like it's a hill? Answer me that.

TARAMEK: Why don't you two keep your voices down and remember



where you are? Answer me that!

POLATES: That is a very good question.

LYSENIA: Chief Librarian, I'm sorry.

TEBIAN: As am I.

POLATES: As you should be. It's bad enough that I have to deal with their sort without you acting like street rabble.

KERIDES: Their sort?

ADREA: He means us, Kerides.

KERIDES: Oh.

POLATES: What is the argument about today?

TEBIAN: This heretic believes the world is round.

LYSENIA: And this dull-witted buffoon will not even read my thesis on the subject.

POLATES: Gentlemen, this is a library. If you wish to indulge in juvenile name-calling and insults, I suggest you take up politics.

LYSENIA: As you wish, librarian.

POLATES: Now what are you doing in this chamber anyway?

LYSENIA: I was looking for a scroll reaching back over a thousand summers. I believe it contains information on...

POLATES: I'm not interested in what it contains.

KERIDES: I am. I've heard this theory and...

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: You're going to tell me to shut up, aren't you?

ADREA: Hmm. Maybe I can train you after all.

POLATES: If it will shut everyone up then I'll get the scroll.

TEBIAN: Librarian, you mustn't do this.

POLATES: In my library I decide what I do. I know the scroll you mean. It would be on the top shelf, wouldn't it. You, boy. Give me those steps.

FX: WOOD PUSHED.

KERIDES: Here.

ADREA: I thought it was Pharaoh's library.

FX: FOOTSTEPS ON WOODEN STEPS.

POLATES: Ah. There it is. Why is always the ones you want are the ones at the back?  
(STRETCHING, STRAINING)  
I've a good mind to just throw you all out... nearly... got it...  
no. Ow.

KERIDES: Is something wrong?

POLATES: No. Nothing.  
(BECOMES BREATHLESS, LOSES COMPOSURE)  
Nothing at... what? What's happening? I feel... My arm... I...  
can't... can't breathe.

FX: CLATTER AS POLATES COLLAPSES, BRINGING DOWN SHELVES AND ROLLS OF PAPYRUS.

TAMAREK: Librarian!

KERIDEA: Help me move these scrolls off him!

ADREA: I'll fetch a healer.

KERIDES: No need. The librarian is dead.

### **FIRST COMMERCIAL**

ADREA: What do you mean the librarian's dead? He can't be. He was talking just a few moments ago. Well, more insulting than talking.

KERIDES: Well, his insulting days are over.

ADREA: Oh.  
(BEAT)

Why is it we can't even come to a library without someone dropping dead?

KERIDES: Don't blame me.

ADREA: This wouldn't have happened if we'd gone on a picnic.

TEBIAN: Can you and your wife save your bickering for another place?

KERIDES: She's not my wife.

TEBIAN: And she talks to you like this already? You poor boy.

ADREA: Hey! I am still here, you know!

TEBIAN: What killed him?

KERIDES: I'm not sure. A physician may find the answer but...

LYSENIA: But?

TEBIAN: Don't tell me you have a theory about this as well, Lysenia.

LYSENIA: I was going to suggest that his heart failed, Tebian.

TEBIAN: Oh.

ADREA: What does "oh" mean?

TEBIAN: It means I was thinking the same thing. The suddenness of it.

LYSENIA: And the mention of his arm, a classic sign.

TEBIAN: True, as is the difficulty in taking breath.

LYSENIA: It seems we are in agreement, Tebian.

TEBIAN: And that will never do.

ADREA: Why not?

LYSENIA: Think of our reputations. We get paid very well for our debates.

TEBIAN: Twice a month. If people found out we agreed... it would be disaster for both of us.

ADREA: It's not exactly great for the librarian, is it? Even if he was an insulting pig.

TEBIAN: At least it was quick.

LYSENIA: Very.

KERIDES: Too quick.

ADREA: No.

KERIDES: No?

ADREA: No! Come over here.

FX: FOOTSTEPS DRAGGING.

KERIDES: Adrea, let go.

ADREA: Don't go looking for a mystery here, Kerides. He died, his heart failed. It's sad... well, maybe not that sad. He wasn't very nice. But his heart failed and he died.

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: Yes?

KERIDES: And no.

ADREA: How can it be yes and no?

KERIDES: He said "Ow!" before he died.

ADREA: If my heart was giving out I'd probably say something as well.

KERIDES: But no "Ow" - surely that's an annoyance, a pin-prick rather than something as enormous as a heart failing.

ADREA: How would I know? My heart's fine. I'm young and pretty.

KERIDES: Yes, you are. Very pretty.

ADREA: You think so?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: Prettier than a flower?

KERIDES: Well, yes.

ADREA: Prettier than last night's sunset?

KERIDES: I, well, yes.

ADREA: Prettier than that harpy troll Hanek you've been seeing without telling me?

KERIDES: What?

ADREA: Don't think I've forgotten. Now forget about this. There's no mystery. He's dead.

KERIDES: I suppose you're right.

ADREA: That's the most sensible thing you've said all day.

KERIDES: His family should be informed.

ADREA: I wonder if he had a wife. Can you imagine what he'd have been like about the house? Anyway, it's not our problem.

KERIDES: You're right. But we should stay to answer any the authorities may have. He must have been an important man to have this position.

ADREA: But that could take hours.

KERIDES: Possibly long into the night.

ADREA: I'm not staying here all night.

KERIDES: It won't be my choice.

ADREA: I know what you're doing.

KERIDES: What?

ADREA: Don't play innocent with me. You're hoping that you can scare me into letting you take a look at this by saying we could be here all night.

KERIDES: Adrea, I'm not that sneaky.

ADREA: Not much. You must have a mind as twisted as a pit of snakes to work out some of the things you do. But I don't suppose it would do any harm for you to take a look - a quick look - if it means I sleep in my own bed tonight. You too.

KERIDES: Well, if you insist.

ADREA:

Don't push your luck. You can sleep in your own bed. Alone.

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: Just get on with it.

TARAMEK: You're not leaving, then? Good.

KERIDES: Why good?

TARAMEK: I don't want to be left alone with those two.

KERIDES: Who?

TAMAREK: Those two. Lysenia and Tebian. I don't trust them.

KERIDES: You think one of them killed the librarian?

TAMAREK: I'm more worried about them killing each other.

ADREA: Why would they do that? They just disagree about...

TAMAREK: Everything. I've heard their arguments. You saw them when you got here.

ADREA: We heard them first.

TAMAREK: Everyone has heard them. They've been carrying on their arguments for over a year all across Alexandria.

KERIDES: Had they been coming here for long?

TAMAREK: Several months. Polates had been forced to threaten to ban them on several occasions which would have been a disaster for either of them.

KERIDES: It would be. Let me have a look at his body.

ADREA: Don't be disgusting.

KERIDES: No, I'm interested. Look at the cuts on his face.

ADREA: They're from papyrus. He must have got them from the scrolls when he fell.

KERIDES: You're right. You can see his blood on a few of the scrolls there.

ADREA:  
cuts were part of the job.

I'm glad I'm not cleaning up this place. Anyway, he said paper

KERIDES: He did. His hands are covered with them.

TAMAREK: His hands were always covered with them.

FX: DISTANT CLATTERING.

TARAMEK: Must be the guard here already.

ADREA: Who's in charge now?

TARAMEK: I don't know. It'll be decided later. I probably should show them the way here. With poor Polates dead, I doubt if anyone knows the library as well as I do.

FX: FOOTSTEPS HURRY AWAY.

ADREA: Who'd want to know a library anyway?

KERIDES: I could happily live here.

ADREA: Not with me you couldn't. I'm busy enough keeping our house clean. I hate to think how much time it would take to tidy this place. Or to find anything.

KERIDES: But did you ever see one like that?

ADREA: Ugh. That's disgusting. The finger's turning black. That must have been there for days.

KERIDES: It wasn't there when we came in. He showed us his hands remember.

ADREA: So how...

FX: KERIDES SNIFFING.

ADREA: Will you stop that? What if someone sees you? Worse than that, what if someone sees that I'm with you?

KERIDES: There's a peculiar odour... I vaguely recognise it.

ADREA: You take me to a library, you have me look at a dead body... I am never going anywhere with you again.

KERIDES: He was up these steps, looking for a scroll...

TEBIAN: One of Lysenia's heretical texts.

LYSENIA: Mud-brained idiot. If you would just listen...

ADREA: It's bad enough that I have to put up with Kerides making no sense most of the time, I'm not listening to you two argue. Do you hear me?

LYSENIA: (LIKE A NAUGHTY SCHOOLBOY)  
Yes.

TEBIAN: (EQUALLY SO)  
Sorry.

ADREA: So you should be.

KERIDES: I'm beginning to see it now. In fact, it's very clear.

KARNAK: What's clear, Thinker?

KERIDES: General Karnak. I'm surprised to see you.

KARNAK: Even soldiers read, young Thinker. I come here this same day every week.

TARAMEK: I thought I saw you earlier.

KARNAK: What was so important to bring me here from my reading?

ADREA: Don't look at me. It wasn't my idea.

TAMAREK: I thought it best. Polates, the librarian. He's dead.

TEBIAN: His heart failed as he was fetching a scroll.

KARNAK: And you are... I've seen you. You're Tebian.

TEBIAN: I am.

LYSENIA: And I am Lysenia, General. Polates was getting a scroll for me when his heart failed.

KARNAK: It's tragic but not really something to interest the palace guard.

KERIDES: I think it is.

ADREA: Here we go.



KARNAK: Why would a simple case of heart failure interest me?

KERIDES: Because he was murdered. And that scroll was the murder weapon.

## SECOND COMMERCIAL

LYSENIA: What do you mean, the librarian was murdered?

TEBIAN: Nonsense.

KERIDES: Oh, I think it's quite obvious. The only question I have is who killed him.

TEBIAN: And how could the scroll be the murder weapon?

LYSENIA: We were all here. He had heart failure.

TEBIAN: That's right.

LYSENIA: Stop agreeing with me.

TEBIAN: Oh, sorry.

ADREA: Are you two finished?

KARNAK: Just what I was going to say. Taramek here told me it was heart failure, Thinker.

KERIDES: Oh, his heart did fail, but it wasn't for natural reasons. He was poisoned.

KARNAK: I thought you said the scroll was the murder weapon.

KERIDES: It was. You see, the scroll was poisoned.

TEBIAN: A poisoned scroll?

ADREA: How can a scroll be poisoned? It's not like he was eating them. Was he? He was unpleasant but I didn't think he was addled.

KERIDES: Think about it, Adrea. What did he do before he died?

ADREA: He insulted us. A lot.

KERIDES: Apart from that. When he was getting the scroll.

ADREA: He said 'ow'. He cut himself.

KERIDES: Exactly. He cut himself on a scroll that had been treated with poison. It's why that one cut went black so quickly.

KARNAK: Which scroll was it?

LYSENIA: It was one I asked him for.

TAMAREK: And which Tebian tried to stop the librarian from fetching.

KARNAK: Is that true, Tebian? Why is that?

TEBIAN: Because I didn't want Lysenia reading it.

KERIDES: Or perhaps because you only wanted Lysenia to handle it?

TEBIAN: What?

TAMAREK: It makes sense. You two have been arguing back and forth through the city for months. Your rivalry is famous for its viciousness.

TEBIAN: We disagree, that's all.

KARNAK: Disagree enough to kill?

TAMAREK: And you did say that you had read the text before.

TEBIAN: I have - and I draw completely different conclusions than Lysenia.

TAMAREK: So, you treated the scroll with poison so that he would be killed when he went for the scroll. But instead, my poor friend, Polates, reached for the scroll and he died instead.

TEBIAN: That's nonsense.

KARNAK: What do you make of it, young Thinker?

KERIDES: I really wish you wouldn't call me that.

KARNAK: Tamarek's theory. Does it make sense to you?

KERIDES: Oh, it makes perfect sense.

TAMAREK: Murderer.

KARNAK: You're sure, Thinker?

KERIDES: Oh, yes. It makes perfect sense, but it's not the truth.

LYSENIA: It's not?

KERIDES: Of course it isn't. You and Tebian need each other. Who would he debate with if he killed you?

ADREA: You two make a fortune by arguing in public.

KARNAK: Do you pay her to argue with you, Kerides?

KERIDES: No, I think she throws that in for free.

ADREA: Is this the feast of insulting Adrea day?

KERIDES: I'm sorry.

ADREA: You will be. And as for these two... anybody with even one eye can tell that you're friends.

KERIDES: Tebian didn't try to kill Lysenia - it would cost him a fortune if he did. And Lysenia didn't know where the scroll was kept.

KARNAK: So who did kill Polates?

KERIDES: I've no proof on that yet. If I just look at the scroll...

FX: PARCHMENTS MOVED.

KERIDES: Ow!

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: Oh. It's a paper cut. Oh dear. That's not good.

ADREA: Kerides. Kerides!

KERIDES: Adrea, there must be a scroll with a cure for the poison. Find it.

ADREA: Where? Kerides, where?

KERIDES: (WEAKER)  
Find it. I feel a little faint. Tamarek, hold the scroll.

TAMAREK: What?  
(YELPS)

I'm cut.

ADREA:  
remember. Where is it?

Kerides! I don't know where to find this scroll. I can't read,

TAMAREK: I'm cut.

KERIDES: Find it, Adrea.

ADREA: I can't.

TAMAREK: It's in the next chamber. This is black hooded cobra venom.  
For pity's sake, someone get the scroll.

KARNAK: There's no need. Is there, Thinker?

KERIDES: (NORMAL)

No. This isn't the poisoned scroll. That's safely out of the way.  
I just wanted to see how you would react if you thought you'd been cut  
by it.

KARNAK: Only the killer would know which poison was used. I think he  
just persuaded you to confess, Taramek.

TARAMEK: This is nonsense.

KERIDES: It's simple, really. You said you know the library better than  
anyone now that Polates is dead. You picked a day when you knew General Karnak would  
be here and you set out to kill Polates.

TAMAREK: Why would I?

KARNAK: To get the job as head librarian?

KERIDES: Probably. He said that he loved this library - and he hated the  
way Tebian and Lysenia had free run of the place, arguing all the time. That's why you  
wanted to be head librarian isn't it? So you could make this a quiet place of learning again.

KARNAK: You might as well answer - I have enough to torture the truth  
out of you already.

TAMAREK: Yes. This library is a sacred place. Learning... education is  
a sacred calling. It's not to be taken lightly, the way those two put it on show like a theatre  
for a baying crowd. Polates was weak. He let them corrupt this place. Someone had to do  
something.

KERIDES: You're wrong, Tamarek. Education doesn't belong locked away in the dark like this. It should be seen and talked about and lived. By everyone.

KARNAK: He'll have time to think about that - well, unless the hall of justice decides to execute him. Guards, take him away. Good work, Thinker.

KERIDES: General.

KARNAK: Come on. Move this criminal - and don't be gentle. He spoiled my reading.

FX: FOOTSTEPS MOVE AWAY.

LYSENIA: I never thought you'd tried to poison me, Tebian.

TEBIAN: I know - we'd be mad to risk the good thing we have. The publicity from this could treble our crowds.

LYSENIA: We'll have to find a bigger place for our debates.

TEBIAN: I know just the place. Come on.

FX: FOOTSTEPS MOVE AWAY.

KERIDES: You're welcome. I suppose we'd better go, Adrea. Adrea, are you all right?

ADREA: Of course I'm not all right. I thought you were poisoned.

KERIDES: I'm not. All I have is a paper cut - not a poisoned one. I'm fine.

ADREA: You won't be.

FX: SOUNDS OF ADREA THUMPING KERIDES.

ADREA: You scared me half to death!

FX: MORE THUMPING.

ADREA: I thought you were going to die!

KERIDES: It's all right, Adrea, it wasn't real.

ADREA: But if it was.

KERIDES: It wasn't.

ADREA: But if it was... I couldn't have found the scroll you would have needed to save your life. I couldn't have found it because I can't read. Any of these.

KERIDES: That's not your fault.

ADREA: No, it's yours! Finding mysteries and murders everywhere. And for that stupid trick with the scroll. And for not teaching me to read.

KERIDES: You told me you didn't have any need for reading.

ADREA: Well, now I do! And you're going to teach me.

FX: SHORT MUSICAL BRIDGE.

ADREA: So this letter is... Alpha?

KERIDES: Yes, that's very good.

ADREA: This one's Beta... Gamma... Epsilon...

KERIDES: Yes, it won't take you long to learnt them all.

ADREA: Isn't this better than being at the tavern kissing that trollop, Hanek?

KERIDES: I haven't kissed Hanek,

ADREA: Who then?

KERIDES: Well, I've never actually kissed a girl.

ADREA: I knew it.

KERIDES: What about you?

ADREA: I've never kissed a girl either.

KERIDES: That's not what I meant.

ADREA: My master was clear that slaves didn't have the right to choose who they fell in love with.

KERIDES: Does anyone choose?

ADREA: Don't go philosopher on me.

KERIDES:

So, neither of us has kissed anybody. Ever.

ADREA: Well, no...

KERIDES: Good... now where were we?

ADREA: Reading.

# DEATH OF A THOUSAND PAPER CUTS

## Notes

Given that the great library of Alexandria was one of the things we talked about when putting the series together, it was never in doubt that we would visit the place for a story.

The first thing we talked about was, who would be likely to be at the great library? Scholars, historians, philosophers... we talked a bit about the football-playing philosophers in Monty Python and then one of us mentioned that philosophers were so lauded in the ancient Greek world that they were more like today's rock stars. We got to thinking about a pair of feuding philosophers doing great business by arguing with each other, and that formed the backdrop from the murder.

Who else would be there? A librarian who knew everything about the library? Well, he had to be the victim, didn't he? You can't have someone who knows everything in a story. Kerides wouldn't be needed. So the Librarian had to die – and that meant we could make him unpleasant which would allow Adrea to use her acid tongue with him.

A really important development was Adrea thinking that Kerides would die because she couldn't read. This was a moment of revelation for her. She had to learn things she didn't know if she was going to be more than a housekeeper for him. It also gave us the chance to show she actually cared about him, and that she wasn't entirely comfortable with that.

I shouldn't mention favourites among the scripts we've done, but Death of a Thousand Paper Cuts is one of my favourites.

## KERIDES THE THINKER

## DEATH OF A NOBODY

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 17<sup>th</sup> April 2011

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and when we first meet her, a slave. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II. He's old and widely respected. Anyone who takes



his age for a sign of weakness makes a huge mistake. A very astute man.

KARNAK: Head of the Palace Guard. A no-nonsense cop of his day. Harsh but fair. He and Karnak are old friends despite their differences.

HEPTERA: Landlady of Kerides and Adrea. She doesn't much like them - but they pay good money. She's convinced they're up to something. She's a prudish busybody. In her 40s.

SHEM: A rogue. A thief who robs Kerides - but who also has a thriving stall in the market. He's a shifty character but a useful informant if there are more stories for Kerides.

FX: RUSTLING OF PAPERS.

KERIDES:           Interesting... interesting...

ADREA:            Kerides... Kerides...

KERIDES:           (DISTRACTED)  
                  Hmm?

ADREA:            Kerides!

KERIDES:           Yes, Adrea?

ADREA:                           I was just wondering, what were you thinking of doing tonight?

KERIDES:                        Well, I thought I'd read these papers we got from the library.  
You know, the ones about the young princess who became Pharaoh then left in a chariot of  
the Gods and...

ADREA:            (INTERRUPTING)  
                                      So you're going to spend all night reading?

KERIDES:           Well, yes.

ADREA:            And what will I be doing?

KERIDES:           Umm... I don't know.

ADREA:                           That makes two of us. I'm going to be bored. Again!

KERIDES:           You could read these papers with me.

ADREA:                           I'm bored not desperate. Just once, we could walk to a tavern  
and watch the sun set...

FX: CREAK OF A DOOR.

ADREA:            Or...

FX: A SECOND CREAK AT THE DOOR.

ADREA:                           ...oh, all right, Kerides, you can rip my clothes off and ravish  
me on the couch.

KERIDES: What?

HEPTERA: What?

ADREA: Our landlady. Heptera. I saw her through the window. Tell the truth, that's what you come snooping round here expecting to hear, isn't it?

HEPTERA: Don't be disgusting.

ADREA: You're the one with the dirty mind, trying to catch people out.

HEPTERA: You two are up to something.

ADREA: Trust me, Heptera, we've never been up to anything. Ever. And we're not likely to at this rate either.

HEPTERA: If you weren't Vizier Mentep's favourite I'd throw you out into the street. What the senile old fool sees in you two I don't know.

ADREA: Do you want to do it, Kerides? Or will I?

KERIDES: Oh... You can do it.

HEPTERA: What are you two talking about?

MENTEP: They were wondering how to tell you that I'm right behind you.

HEPTERA: What? Oh, Vizier... I was...

KARNAK: You'll have to explain things quite slowly to Mentep - I hear he's a senile old fool.

MENTEP: Apparently so, General Karnak. Still, I've been called worse - usually by you.

KARNAK: That's true.

MENTEP: Your name is Heptera, isn't it?

HEPTERA: Yes, Vizier. I didn't mean... well, I didn't...

MENTEP: Oh, come, come. There's no hard feelings in the house of my friend, Kerides. Perhaps I can arrange a tour of the palace for you, dear lady... starting with the dungeons?

HEPTERA: Dungeons?

MENTEP: That reminds me, General Karnak. I keep meaning to ask if

you've tortured anyone recently.

KARNAK: Not for months. I think I'm going soft.

HEPTERA: Torture?

KARNAK: Now would be a good time for you to leave.

HEPTERA: I...

FX: A SCREAM AND THE DOOR SLAMMING.

MENTEP: Was it something we said?

KERIDES: You two enjoyed that.

MENTEP: Yes. Yes, we did.

KARNAK: The world will be a sadder place when you can't torment an old troll like that.

ADREA: I knew there was a reason I liked those two. Can I get you wine?  
Some food?

MENTEP: Bless you, child, but I'm afraid this isn't a social call.

KERIDES: It isn't?

KARNAK: I'm afraid not. There's been a murder and I'd like to hear what you think about it. You are the Thinker, aren't you?

KERIDES: I wish you wouldn't call me that.

KARNAK: And I wish my wife still looked like she did the day we were married but we make the best of life as it is, Thinker.

KERIDES: Very well. Please, lead the way, General.

FX: DOOR OPENING.

ADREA: Another murder. Why don't you ever get invited to parties, Kerides? It's always murders or a theft or something.

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: Oh, all right. I'm coming.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: CREAK OF A DOOR.

KARNAK: This is the place, young Thinker.

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

ADREA: What a mess. Is it the cleaning slave's year off?

KERIDES: Don't touch anything. Be careful of that stool.

ADREA: I wasn't offering to clean up - you don't pay me enough to clean our own house let alone another one. And I'm especially not cleaning the broken dishes off the floor. They look sharp.

KERIDES: They're not broken. They're smashed.

ADREA: They don't look like they were good quality - ours are much nicer. Because I picked them.

KERIDES: There's not much here. Is there another room?

KARNAK: No. This is it. One room. The bed's over there. You can't see it in the corner till you open a window shutter.

KERIDES: Is the body there?

KARNAK: No...

FX: SHUTTER BEING PULLED AT.

KERIDES: The shutter is stiff. I can't get it to move.

ADREA: Let me see. I know how this kind of shutter works. There are two more outside the building. You have to open them before you can open the inside ones.

KARNAK: Guards. Open the outer shutters. I had them closed because don't open outwards properly. They get stuck halfway to the wall.

MENTEP: I'm sure your soldiers will stop anyone walking into them.

KERIDES: Were the shutters open when you got here?

KARNAK: No. They were shut, outside and inside.

FX: SHUTTERS OPEN.

ADREA: Try it now.

FX: SHUTTERS AGAIN.

ADREA: There. See? Easy. There are some things I know more about than you.

KERIDES: Well, where's the body? Has it been moved somewhere? There's a lot of blood here but no body.

KARNAK: That's one of the reasons I brought you here, Thinker. We don't have a body.

ADREA: If you don't have a body, how can you have a murder?

KERIDES: A witness?

KARNAK: Exactly.

ADREA: But if you have a witness, why do you need Kerides?

KARNAK: Mentep?

MENTEP: Guard, bring in the witness.

KARNAK: With this witness it's not quite as simple as you'd think.

FX: SHUFFLING FOOTSTEPS.

MENTEP: This way, my friend. Careful.

SHONTU: Which way, sir?

MENTEP: Here. Take my hand.

SHONTU: Thank you.

ADREA: He's blind?

KERIDES: Our witness is blind...

**FIRST COMMERCIAL**

KARNAK:                               There you have my problem, young Thinker.

KERIDES:                               A murder with no body and the only witness is a blind man?  
Yes, I understand why that would be a problem.

KARNAK:                               But can you work out what happened here?

KERIDES:                               I don't know.

MENTEP:                               Will you try, Kerides?

KERIDES:                               Yes, of course, Mentep.

MENTEP:                               I told you he would, Karnak.

KARNAK:                               I never doubted that he would.

KERIDES:                               If I am to find any answers I should start asking questions.

ADREA:                                 Who was it that got killed?

KERIDES:                               That would have been my first question.

ADREA:                                 Oh. Well, it's your fault - you should have asked quicker. And  
it's scary that I'm starting to think like you.

KARNAK:                               Finished?

ADREA:                                 Sorry.

KERIDES:                               So do we know who it was that was murdered?

KARNAK:                               No. All we know is that the house was rented last month.  
Communication and money were dealt with through a slave but the owner couldn't give a  
description of the slave.

MENTEP:                               He never met the man who rented the house. Never saw him.

KERIDES:                               What about the neighbours?

ADREA:                                 In this part of the city? Forget it. Nobody ever sees anything  
here. They're famous for it.

KARNAK:                               Unfortunately, she's right.

ADREA:                                 You don't have to sound so surprised. I mean... sorry, General.

MENTEP: That's quite all right, child. I like seeing someone put him in his place.

ADREA: As long as he doesn't decide my place is in the dungeon.

MENTEP: He won't. Go on, Kerides.

KERIDES: The blind man. You called him a witness.

KARNAK: That's right.

KERIDES: Well, obviously he didn't see anything.

ADREA: Oh, I could have told you that.

KERIDES: So obviously he's a witness for what he heard.

MENTEP: Precisely.

KERIDES: What did you hear...

SHONTU: My name is Shontu, Sir.

KERIDES: Shontu. Tell me what you heard.

SHONTU: Well, I'm not sure.

KERIDES: Try. Please.

SHONTU: Very well. I was outside, begging. It was late in the day, usually a good time for begging. Men are most charitable when they're with their women when they want to look kind.

KERIDES: Is this a place you beg in often?

SHONTU: From time to time. It's best to move around. If people see you every day they keep their money to themselves but if they only see you once or twice a month they don't mind. So I have a dozen or so places I work.

ADREA: When was the last time you were here? Sorry. I'll shut up.

KERIDES: No, it's a question I was going to ask.

SHONTU: Fourteen days ago. I had a good day - it was just before a feast day so people were generous – with food as well as money.



KERIDES: That's good. Where exactly do you sit when you beg here?

SHONTU: Not outside this house. It's too small. The bigger one next door. The bigger and better the house, the worse it makes me look. That's good for business.

KERIDES: I hadn't thought of that.

SHONTU: You've got to think this out before you start. You can't just pick any place at random. For instance, this is a busy street. A lot of people use it on their way to market and to temples.

ADREA: How much do you make?

SHONTU: On a good day? Ooh...

FX: JANGLE OF COINS.

SHONTU: This much.

ADREA: Kerides, you're in the wrong business. He's got more money than you.

SHONTU: Like I said, business has been good.

KERIDES: What did you hear?

SHONTU: When? Last time I was here or earlier today?

KERIDES: Today.

SHONTU: Shouting. Dishes crashing. I was really disappointed. Last time I was here there was a smell of cooking from the house, I could smell it at the bigger house. Chicken and spices. Almost made me move down here in the hope he'd give me some.

KERIDES: Tell me more about the shouting and the breaking dishes.

SHONTU: Well, I was a good way along the street so I couldn't hear exactly what was being said.

ADREA: So you moved closer.

SHONTU: How did you know?

ADREA: Because it's what I would have done. Well, how do you think a slave finds out what's going on?

KERIDES: So you moved closer. What did you hear?

SHONTU:  
never repeat.

He was in a rage. Shouting terrible things. Insults I would

KARNAK: You didn't mind repeating them to me.

SHONTU: There wasn't a woman present then.

KERIDES: Trust me, it won't be anything she hasn't heard before.

ADREA: Kerides. Do you mind?

KERIDES: Oh, sorry. I meant...

ADREA: I know what you meant. You, what did he say, and don't worry about me being a woman. He's right, I have heard worse. Actually I've probably said worse - to him.

SHONTU: He said, "I'll kill you. You are the son of a jackal mother and no father".

ADREA: That's all? I was hoping for something juicier than that.

SHONTU: He told his enemy to leave on his belly like the snake he was or face the sting of a scorpion.

KERIDES: Interesting.

ADREA: Those are terrible insults. Really dull.

KERIDES: But they're still interesting because they're insults - and a threat - used by the Matini tribe - they claim they used to be the kings of the Mitannites.

ADREA: What would a Mitannite king be doing here?

KERIDES: The Mitannites are a broken tribe. Times are hard for them now.

ADREA: From the look of all that blood on the bed, things got even harder for this one.

KERIDES: He lost a lot of blood. The spread over the mattress must be two cubits wide and at least a cubit deep. He would have died from the loss of blood or at least have been unconscious from it.

ADREA: So someone moved the body after he was killed.

KERIDES: But there's no sign of that, is there? There would be blood on the floor or smears of it on the side of the bed from the body being moved.

FX: SCUFFING.

KERIDES:  
bed... oh.

I wonder how much blood he did lose? If I look under the

MENTEP: What is it, Kerides?

KERIDES: There's no blood under the bed.

ADREA: So? There's plenty dried in to the top.

KERIDES: And that's what's so strange. If the blood was released slowly it wouldn't have spread so much. It would have dried in a much smaller area. So for it to have covered this much of the bed there must have been a lot and it must have been released very quickly. So why hasn't it seeped through?

KARNAK: Thinker, I brought you here for answers, but so far, you're only coming up with more questions.

KERIDES: I know.

ADREA: You should try living with that.

KERIDES: Shontu, would you take us to exactly the place where you usually beg in this street?

KARNAK: Is this necessary?

KERIDES: I think so, General.

KARNAK: Oh, very well. Show us, Shontu.

SHONTU: This way. I think. Yes, this way.

FX: STREET SOUNDS. WALKING.

SHONTU: It's over here. I can count the paces. Yes, I know it.

ADREA: (SNIFFING)

How could you forget it? What is that stench?

KERIDES: Pig dung. Every kind of dung has its own particular odour. They're all quite different and...

ADREA: Kerides, I don't need to know. And I don't need to know how you know either.

KERIDES: Is this the place, Shontu?

SHONTU: Yes, yes it is. There's a post behind that I lean on sometimes - but not very often. People don't like to see beggars being lazy.

KERIDES: So you were standing here when you heard the argument?

SHONTU: Yes.

KERIDES: And then you moved towards the house to listen.

SHONTU: Yes.

KERIDES: And you heard them argue about money.

SHONTU: Yes. Terrible words, they used.

KERIDES: And you kept moving. This far?

SHONTU: Further.

KERIDES: And you walked this path?

SHONTU: The ground is worn into a trough this way.

KERIDES: So I see.

FX: WOODEN CREAK.

KERIDES: I'll close these. And then what, Shontu?

SHONTU: When I was near the door, I heard one of the men yell in terrible pain and I was pushed aside. A big man. Powerful. And then he was gone.

KERIDES: Then you entered?

SHONTU: I did. But I couldn't find the body.

KERIDES: Did you go deep into the room?

SHONTU: Yes. I felt the plates break under my feet.

KERIDES: But you couldn't find a body.

SHONTU: No. So I raised the alarm.

KARNAK: Mentep and I were nearby so we came to see what the commotion was.

MENTEP: And it's a mystery.

KERIDES: Yes, and it complex. I have the facts but many of them don't make sense at all.

KARNAK: There's no shame in admitting it has you beaten, young Thinker.

KERIDES: Oh, I didn't say that, General. In fact, I think I understand it all now.  
(ABRUPTLY)  
Adrea, put your dress back on!

ADREA: What?

MENTEP: What?

KARNAK: What?

ADREA: Kerides, what is the matter with you?

KERIDES: Nothing. I just wanted to see who would look – and you looked, Shontu. Not in Adrea's general direction, but straight at her. You're not blind. You're just very good at pretending you are.

## SECOND COMMERCIAL

MENTEP: He's not blind?

KERIDES: No. He looked straight at Adrea when I said she was naked.

ADREA: He's a fake? And a pervert!

KARNAK: Is this true? I can make you talk, Shontu.

SHONTU: How did you know?

KERIDES: Your story was plausible enough - until it was put alongside the facts. You said you once stood at the other house but smelled the chicken from inside this house - but how could you smell anything for the pig dung? And the argument you claim to have heard... if the shutters were closed you wouldn't have heard a thing and if they were open, you would have walked into them as you followed the furrow in the ground towards this house. And as for you being inside this house, looking for a body, you claimed to have stepped on broken dishes, but the dishes were broken, not stepped on. They would have been turned to powder if you had stepped on them. Your whole story is lies.

KARNAK: Why would he lie? Unless he has something to hide.

MENTEP: You think he's the murderer?

KARNAK: What other reason could there be? Don't you agree, Kerides?

KERIDES: It looks that way.

KARNAK: Then we have our man. But it's up to you, Kerides. Should I arrest him?

MENTEP: Say what you think, Kerides.

KERIDES: Yes. Yes, you should arrest him.

MENTEP: Are you sure?

KARNAK: The boy said to arrest him, Mentep.

KERIDES: Arrest him for lying to you, General, but not for murder.

KARNAK: Would you like to explain that?

MENTEP: Go on, Kerides.

KERIDES: Shontu - or whatever his name really is - there's no doubt that the story he told us was all lies but the lies go beyond his words.

KARNAK: I don't follow.

ADREA: Neither do I - but I'm getting used to it by now.

KERIDES: Adrea, would you look at the shelves, please.

ADREA: What? They're just shelves.

KERIDES: But what do you see on the shelves?

ADREA: Jars? For storage?

KERIDES: Yes. What about dust?

ADREA: Forget it. I told you I'm not cleaning this place.

KERIDES: No, I mean is there any dust on the shelf?

ADREA: Oh. No. no, there's not.

KERIDES: Now look at the jars themselves.

ADREA: What about them? Ugh! They're filthy! Covered with dust and dirt.

KERIDES: Exactly. And how long would you say it would take for that much dust to accumulate?

ADREA: Months at least. When I was a slave my master bought a house a few days sailing along the Nile. It looked like it hadn't been clean since he was a boy. Of course, I got left to do all the cleaning myself. Not a bit of help from anyone, especially the eunuchs. I think they lost their... enthusiasm. So who had to do it? Me. As usual. Morning till night every day.

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: With no help at all. Just me, and with my master complaining all the time that I wasn't going fast enough.

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: I mean, what would he know about... oh... sorry. It's just something that really annoyed me, that's all.

MENTEP: I'll feel sorry for that boy when she marries him, Karnak.

KARNAK: I feel sorry for him already.

KERIDES: What's in the jars, Adrea?

FX: SCRAPING OF JARS.

ADREA: Let's see. Ugh! Disgusting. Everything is off.

KERIDES: That one is marked for spices.

ADREA: Ugh. That's bad, too.

KERIDES: The plates and cooking equipment?

ADREA: Filthy. Hasn't been used in months. The pots are thick with dirt and the ashes in the fire are old too.

KERIDES: So it hasn't been used in months.

ADREA: No. Wait a minute. He said...

KERIDES: That someone in this house was cooking chicken two weeks ago.

ADREA: Nobody's cooked in this house since before you came to Alexandria. So nobody's lived here in months.

KERIDES: But the tops of the jars are clean, as if someone has tried to make the place look tidy on the surface.

ADREA: They didn't do a very good job.

KERIDES: And the thing that really confused me was the blood. Why hadn't it seeped through the mattress? There was so much of that it should have soaked through and dripped onto the floor, but it didn't. Why? Unless it was old blood.

ADREA: Old blood?

KERIDES: When outside the body, blood thickens and dries – I think this is old blood, probably from a slaughtered beast - put here to make it look like there was a murder.

ADREA: Look like a murder? You're saying there wasn't a murder at all?

KERIDES: I can't be certain, but when the facts are put together, that's the story they tell me.

ADREA: But why? Who would do something like that? And why would they bother?

KERIDES: It would have to be someone with enough money to pay for this house, to pay Shontu to put on his act... and someone who would want to be close enough to see it play out. Do you have any ideas Vizier Mentep? Or you, General Karnak?

MENTEP: Pay up, Karnak. The boy has you beaten.

KARNAK: I left him too many clues.

FX: JANGLE OF COINS HANDED OVER.

ADREA: You arranged all of this?

KARNAK: Guilty. Should I arrest myself?

ADREA: But why did you do it?



KARNAK: You've worked out everything else, young Thinker. Have you worked that out?

KERIDES: No.

KARNAK: You see, Mentep. He doesn't have everything.

ADREA: It can't just have been the stupid bet you two had.

MENTEP: No, it wasn't.

KERIDES: I know it's annoyed General Karnak that I've solved murders that should have been dealt with by his people.

MENTEP: Annoyed is putting it mildly.

KARNAK: Don't help him, Mentep.

KERIDES: So he arranged all of this...

ADREA: So that you would accuse an innocent man. He did this to discredit you?

KERIDES: I don't think so. You left me the clues needed to accuse this man - but you also left the clues to lead me back to you, General. I think this was a test.

MENTEP: He's got it all now, Karnak.

KARNAK: All right, you win, old friend. You pass the test, Kerides.

ADREA: But what was the test for?

KARNAK: Security and policing in Alexandria is my responsibility. I can't have someone running around the city investigating on their own.

ADREA: Why not? Not that I'd object if he had to stop sticking his nose into murders.

KARNAK: The law has to be investigated and policed by the proper authorities so the public can trust in that law.

ADREA: That still doesn't explain the test.

KARNAK: You've worked it out, young Thinker. I can't have an outsider investigating murder - but if you work for me, that's different.

KERIDES: Work for you? But I'm a scholar. I came here to learn, not to be a policeman.

MENTEP: Oh, you won't be one of the usual guards.

KARNAK: But I will have jobs for you from time to time.

MENTEP: What do you think, Kerides?

ADREA: No. He's not interested. How much does it pay?

KARNAK: Enough to pay for that house of yours every month and a good bit more.

ADREA: The money would be useful.

KERIDES: But I'm a student.

MENTEP: This will pay for your studies.

KERIDES: I don't know...

ADREA: He'll do it.

KERIDES: Adrea...

KERIDES: Typical, you can work out all these murders and read who knows how many languages, but when it comes to thinking about anything practical, you're hopeless. General, he'll do it.

MENTEP: Just agree, Kerides. It'll be much easier for you.

KERIDES: All right. As long as I'm still free to study.

MENTEP: You will be.

ADREA: I can't wait to tell Heptera about your new job. She'll be terrified you arrest her if she's rude about us.

KARNAK: That old ox who was at your house? I'd let you arrest her.

MENTEP: Why Don't you head off home, Kerides? We can make this final in a few days.

KERIDES: Yes, Vizier.

MENTEP:  
proud.

And Kerides... you did well. Your master Fayum would be

KERIDES:           Thank you.

ADREA:               Come on, don't dawdle - let's go and annoy Heptera.

MENTEP:            I still feel sorry for that boy.

KARNAK:           Care for another wager?

MENTEP:            How long it takes her to marry him?

KARNAK:            Exactly. Same stakes?

MENTEP:            Done.

## DEATH OF A NOBODY

### Notes

This story actually came from an old joke. It's a little bit rude – it starts with “It was bath night at the convent...” – choose for yourself whether you read the joke or not. Here it is...

*It was bath night at the convent and young initiate Sister Immaculata was just sitting down in the tub when she heard a knocking at the convent's front door. As the newest recruit, she was last in line for the bath and all of the other nuns were already tucked up in bed. She waited a second in case the knocking stopped. It didn't. “Bugger,” she said in a not very nun-like manner. Looking around she realised that there were no towels. The knocking at the door sounded again. Dripping wet, Immaculata scuttled along the corridor, her feet slapping wetly on the stone floor. “Who is it?” she asked when she reached the door.*

*“It's the blind man from the village,” came the answer.*

*Immaculata offered up a little prayer of thanks that her modesty had been preserved. “Are you alone?” she asked.*

*“Yes,” came the reply.*

*With another prayer of gratitude, she opened the door.*

*A tall young man walked in carrying a toolbox and venetian blinds. “Smashing tits, now where do you want these blinds fitted?”*

Okay, I didn't say it was a good joke or even one that really belongs in the 21st century but it is the joke that put the idea of a blind man into my head. A blind man as a witness... what could a blind man offer by way of clues? What challenges would he give Kerides? And what kind of crime would we need to have for a blind man to be able to give useful clues?

In the long term plan for Kerides there had always been the idea that Mentep or Karnak would set him a puzzle, to see if he really was as good as they thought he was. We had worked out the clues – as usual over coffee and cake – when Claire suggested that this story felt right for being the one set up by Mentep and Karnak. It also served a purpose by giving Kerides and Adrea a regular income and an avenue into investigations that didn't rely on them just happening to be there. Coincidence becomes wearing very quickly. Making Kerides an official of the Palace stopped that from being a possibility and also served as an important part of setting up episode six, Death Of A Pharaoh.

We had a rough plan in place for Kerides even when we started writing the first episode. At that point we had worked out some important developments we wanted going through to episode twelve. By the time we came to write episode four, we had progressed that to a more in-depth plan going through to episode twenty two, with little mini-arcs within that plan. The episodes in these mini-arcs would be written together so that each arc was written as a block. Episodes four, five and six were the first to be done this way. The link between them is quite loose and is less pronounced than subsequent ongoing plots, but it did give them a sense of cohesion, at least for us. This was the first time we wrote a group of Kerides scripts

at one time, and it's how we have always written series since.

# KERIDES THE THINKER

## DEATH OF A PHARAOH

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 15<sup>th</sup> May 2011

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and when we first meet her, a slave. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II. He's old and widely respected. Anyone who takes his age for a sign of weakness makes a huge mistake. A very astute man.

KARNAK: Head of the Palace Guard. A no-nonsense cop of his day. Harsh but fair. He and Mentep are old friends despite their differences.

IMATI: An Egyptian from an old family. Driven, patriotic, amoral. Mid to late 30s.

JINNA: Imati's hench-woman.

FX: CHANTING. RELIGIOUS CHANTING. FOOTSTEPS SHUFFLING.

IMATI: You're sure we'll get in, Kerides?

KERIDES: I'm sure, Imati.

IMATI: Don't use my name. I told you.

KERIDES: Yes. I'm sorry. I understand. Now put this on.

FX: CLOTH SCUFFS A LITTLE.

IMATI: This cloak stinks.

KERIDES: The holy men who travels the lands to the north wear cloaks like these. They will disguise us.

IMATI: The holy men must stink.

KERIDES: They do. Maybe that's why nobody goes near them. Now put it on.

FX: THE TWO MEN DONNING CLOAKS.

IMATI: In the old days, no-one smelling like this would have been allowed in Pharaoh's Palace.

KERIDES: Times change.

IMATI: Be quiet, boy. Is that the temple gate ahead?

KERIDES: Yes. Now bow your head. You're supposed to be a holy man.

IMATI: If those sentries stop us...

KERIDES: They won't. Just keep walking.

FX: FOOTSTEPS. CHANGE FROM SCRUNCHING IN SAND TO SCUFFING ON STONE.

IMATI: They didn't stop us.

KERIDES: I told you they wouldn't.

IMATI: Which way?

KERIDES: Along here.

IMATI: These treasures... they're priceless.

KERIDES: Some of them are a thousand years old. Brought from Thebes by...

IMATI: I don't need a history lesson, boy. Keep moving.

KERIDES: This way.

IMATI: You're sure?

KERIDES: Positive. I've been a member of General Karnak's staff for almost a month. I've spent most of the time getting to know the palace.

IMATI: I'm sure you've been a good little boy, doing what you're told, jumping when Karnak tells you, rolling over to beg when Pharaoh orders it.

KERIDES: Actually I've never met Pharaoh.

IMATI: Which way now?

KERIDES: Turn right here - and that next set of steps leads to Pharaoh's private temple.

IMATI: How long will it take me to get there?

KERIDES: You can't use it today. We can only use this entrance once. The sentry won't leave his post to check if we have the right to be there – but he'll check later. So we only get one chance with this.

IMATI: I hope you're not lying.

KERIDES: I'm not.

IMATI: Guards.

FX: FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING.

KERIDES: Look holy. Keep your eyes down.

IMATI: If they catch us... it's not just us who will die.

KERIDES: I know. But they won't catch us – if you do as I do. Eyes down, be humble.

FX: FOOTSTEPS GET CLOSER, THEN MOVE AWAY.

IMATI: It worked.

KERIDES: Of course it did. Now have I proved to you that this will work?

IMATI: Well enough for today. Now get us out of here.

KERIDES: This way.

FX: BIRDS, A SMALL NUMBER OF FEET SCRUNCHING ON SAND. A BREEZE.

IMATI: We made it.

KERIDES: Walk slower. Holy men don't hurry.

IMATI: They should if they're wearing these disgusting cloaks.

KERIDES: You can take it off when we turn the next corner. We'll be out of sight of the palace.

FX: A FEW MORE FOOTSTEPS THEN CLOAKS BEING REMOVED.

KERIDES: Now, can we talk about...

IMATI: We don't talk about anything until we're back at my house. Understood?

KERIDES: I understand.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

IMATI: Inside, Kerides, quickly.

KERIDES: All right.

FX: DOOR CLOSES. MUFFLED NOISES FROM GAGGED ADREA.

KERIDES: What have you done?

JINNA: She wouldn't shut up.

KERIDES: That sounds about right.

JINNA: I had to gag her.



KERIDES: Why did I never think of that?

FX: OUTRAGED EXCLAMATION FROM GAGGED ADREA.

KERIDES: Take the gag off of her.

IMATI: You don't give the orders here, boy.

KERIDES: You can't do this without me, so I'm taking that gag off of her.

FX: GAG REMOVED.

KERIDES: Adrea, are you all right?

ADREA: That... rag is filthy! I hate to think what it tastes of.

KERIDES: Are you hurt?

ADREA: And don't think I didn't hear what you said about wishing you had thought of gagging me.

KERIDES: I thought you'd hear that.

ADREA: When I get you home...

KERIDES: We are home.

ADREA: You know what I mean. I mean home alone - without people threatening to kill us. If we die here your life isn't going to be worth living.

IMATI: I see why you had to gag her.

ADREA: Hey. I am here, you know.

IMATI: Be quiet, girl. I need you alive. That doesn't mean I need you in good health. Do you understand?

KERIDES: Don't threaten her. If you hurt her...

IMATI: What? What will you do? If you try anything Jinna will kill your woman.

ADREA: I'm not his... oh, I'm being quiet, aren't I?

KERIDES: Yes.

IMATI: If you want the girl to live, you do exactly what you planned.

KERIDES: I understand.

IMATI: Good. Because if you don't help me murder Pharaoh tomorrow,  
the girl is dead.

### **FIRST COMMERCIAL**

FX: PEOPLE MOVING IN THE HOUSE.

KERIDES: Did she hurt you, Adrea?

ADREA: No, but she threatened to. She threatened it a lot.

KERIDES: You're safe for now.

ADREA: That 'for now' worries me.

KERIDES: They know if they hurt you I won't help them.

ADREA: Are you really going to do it?

KERIDES: What choice do I have?

ADREA: You'll kill Pharaoh?

KERIDES: Technically, I won't be killing anyone.

ADREA: You know what I mean.

KERIDES: Yes, I do.

ADREA: They'll execute you, Kerides.

KERIDES: And if I don't, Imati and Jinna will kill you.

IMATI: And don't you forget it, girl. We have a lot of people backing us.  
You two can have a nice romantic night together. Sleeping on the floor in the cellar. The  
walls down there are nice and thick. Nobody will hear you yelling, so don't waste your  
breath.

BRIDGE MUSIC.

FX: DOOR CLOSING.

ADREA: I can't believe we're going to spend the night like this. Tied up  
and sleeping on sacks. In our own cellar. Things were much better when I was a slave.

KERIDES: So you've told me.

ADREA: What's that supposed to mean?

KERIDES: Nothing.

ADREA: Don't 'nothing' me. You never say anything without it meaning something.

KERIDES: All right. It's just that you always say you were better off as a slave. I sometimes wonder if you're happy being here. With me.

ADREA: Kerides...

KERIDES: Yes?

ADREA: Do you really think this is the best time for this conversation? What with us both going to be dead by sundown tomorrow and all?

KERIDES: I thought it might pass some time. Sorry.

ADREA: Forget it.

FX: SCUFFLING ON THE SACKS.

ADREA: This floor isn't very comfortable.

KERIDES: No.

ADREA: It isn't very clean either. I've been putting off tidying down here. Sorry.

KERIDES: Don't worry about it. It's pitch black down here so I can't see anything.

ADREA: Put your shoulder over here.

KERIDES: Are your ropes getting free?

ADREA: No. I just want a pillow to rest my head on.

FX: SCUFFLING. MOVING.

ADREA: Kerides, what are you doing?

KERIDES: When we were being tied, I tensed my muscles, and...

ADREA: (INTERRUPTING)

You don't have any muscles. Although your shoulder felt a lot stronger than I expected. Have you been exercising?

KERIDES: General Karnak insisted that I should at least know which end of a sword to hold now that I work for him sometimes.

ADREA: A pity you didn't have a sword when Imati broke in here last night.

KERIDES: I know.

ADREA: On the other hand, maybe it was for the best. Imati was a soldier – a good one.

KERIDES: How do you know that?

ADREA: I was a slave. Slaves know everything that goes on. We don't count as real people... so we can move around without anyone bothering us - and we hear a lot of things nobody expects us to hear.

KERIDES: Which slaves don't ever discuss with anyone.  
ADREA: What else would we talk about?

KERIDES: So you had heard of Imati.

ADREA: My master - at least he was my master until you got him arrested and executed...

KERIDES: For murdering two people?

ADREA: Don't interrupt. Imati came to my master's house a few times - something about moving troops on ships. He left the army two or three years ago.

KERIDES: I don't think he's stopped fighting though.

ADREA: Why does he have to fight us? We haven't done anything to him. Have we?

KERIDES: It's not personal. We're just how he plans to carry out his scheme.

ADREA: That doesn't make me feel better.

KERIDES: Would it make you feel better if I told you my hands were free?

ADREA: Are you serious?

KERIDES: I was trying to tell you, after I relaxed my muscles the ropes were loose enough for me to get free.

FX: SCUFFLING.

ADREA: I never thought you'd know anything useful.

FX: MORE SCUFFLING.

KERIDES: That's my feet free.

ADREA: Untie my hands. They're behind my back.

KERIDES: I can't see anything. Let me find them.

ADREA: Kerides! Get your hands off my... well just get your hands off.

KERIDES: Oh. Sorry. That wasn't your hand.

ADREA: No! Up a bit! There. That's what hands feel like.

KERIDES: It's because it's so dark.

ADREA: We'll discuss your wandering hands later. Have you got the knots?

KERIDES: I can't see... yes. There. Are your feet tied?

ADREA: I'll untie those. There's no knowing what else you'd grab in the dark.

FX: SCUFFLING.

ADREA: I'm free. Well, apart from the bolted door at the top of the stairs and the armed maniacs in our house.

KERIDES: Imati and Jinna will be asleep, and the door...

FX: CLOTH SCUFFING.

KERIDES: There's a gap at the top of the door.

ADREA: I've been telling you we need that fixed.

KERIDES: It's how we're going to escape.

FX: DOOR CREAKS SLIGHTLY.

KERIDES: See?

ADREA: Oh, what do I know?

KERIDES: This way, I think.

ADREA: Just for once I'm glad you didn't listen to a word I said.  
(BEAT)  
And I know my way around my own house.

KERIDES: Your house?

ADREA: Do you clean it? No? Then it's my house. Would it hurt them to have left a lamp burning?

KERIDES: They weren't expecting us to escape.

ADREA: That's no excuse. It keeps the chill off the house for morning.  
Doesn't she know anything?

FX: DOOR CREAKS.

ADREA: I meant to oil that door. Sorry.

KERIDES: It's not far now. Just across this and we're at the door.

ADREA: Then what are we waiting for? Come on.

KERIDES: Slowly, Adrea. We can't have...

FX: A SCRAPE AND THEN A POT SMASHING ON THE FLOOR.

KERIDES: ...an accident.

ADREA: What happened?

KERIDES: Your dress caught the pot. Your favourite one.

FX: CLAY POT SCRAPING ON FLOOR.

ADREA: I didn't feel it...

KERIDES: I'll get you another one. Come on. We need to move.

IMATI: If you do, you won't make the door alive. I'm an expert shot with the bow.

ADREA: Kerides...

KERIDES: Don't risk it. I don't think he's bluffing.

IMATI: I'm not.

ADREA: At least one of us could make it to the door.

KERIDES: I won't have your death on my conscience, Adrea.

IMATI: Come back over here and sit down.

ADREA: My death? What about Pharaoh?

KERIDES: I... I don't know.

IMATI: They said you were intelligent, Kerides. I didn't think you would be smart enough to escape. That makes me think you really are the right man for this job.

KERIDES: I'm not sure if that's a compliment.

IMATI: It's a pity you're such a coward. You're intelligent but weak. If you were committed to your Pharaoh you would have sacrificed yourself or your woman to get the warning out.

ADREA: He's right, Kerides. I'm not worth the Pharaoh's life.

KERIDES: You are to me. Every life is worth preserving.

IMATI: A worthless, weak sentiment.

KERIDES: Almost every life.

IMATI: Is that aimed at me? Brave talk, boy - a pity your actions don't match them.

ADREA: If you two are just going to argue like that, I'd rather you just put us back in the cellar.

IMATI: So you can escape again? I don't think so. Get comfortable on the couch. Jinna and I will take turns watching you.

KERIDES: I'm sorry, Adrea.

ADREA: So am I. If my dress hadn't caught that pot...

KERIDES:

It wasn't your fault.

ADREA: I know that! You were the one who insisted we bought those pots. Don't argue. You're supposed to be comforting me.

KERIDES: Oh, sorry. At least we didn't get hurt on the broken bits of pot.

ADREA: What? Oh... yes.

KERIDES: They're sharp.

ADREA: And who's going to have to clean that up? Me.

KERIDES: It'll be all right.

ADREA: You promise?

KERIDES: I promise.

ADREA: You might be smart but you're a terrible liar.

KERIDES: I'll try harder in future.

ADREA: Let's hope we have a future.

MUSIC BRIDGE.

FX: COCKEREL CROWING. FOOTSTEPS ON STONE.

IMATI: Remember, Kerides. No tricks or the girl dies.

KERIDES: Exactly the same as we did it yesterday.

FX: FOOTSTEPS ON STONE STEPS.

KERIDES: These steps lead to Pharaoh's private altar.

IMATI: I remember.

GUARD: Halt.

KERIDES: Step aside. We have the sacred oils for Pharaoh's chapel.

GUARD: I wasn't informed...

KERIDES: Then go and check with your superior - but be quick. Pharaoh will be in his chapel in a few minutes and these oils are integral to his ritual.



GUARD:

All right. Go. But hurry. Don't make Pharaoh wait.

FX: HURRYING FOOTSTEPS.

IMATI:

incompetent.

I can't believe we got through. He should be executed for being so

KERIDES:

Pharaoh's shrine. We only have a few minutes. Give me the poison.

This wouldn't have worked if he was competent. Here. This is

IMATI:

I'll put it in the ceremonial wine.

KERIDES:

I thought I was...

IMATI:

I don't trust you not to switch it. You keep watch.

KERIDES:

All right. But hurry.

FX: STOPPER REMOVED. LIQUID POURED.

IMATI:

Is that enough?

KERIDES:

That would kill a dozen horses.

IMATI:

One pharaoh will be enough.

KERIDES:

Someone is coming.

FX: HURRYING FOOTSTEPS.

IMATI:

(WHISPERING)

Wait.

KERIDES:

Are you mad?

IMATI:

him die.

We're well into the shadows. He won't see us. But I want to see

KERIDES:

You're sick.

IMATI:

Maybe.

FX: SCRAPE OF METAL GOBLET ON STONE.

IMATI:

But he just drank the poison.

FX: A GASP, DESPERATE FOR AIR. PHARAOH COLLAPSING.

IMATI:                So fast.

KERIDES:                        The man who sold it to us said it would be almost instant. I'm glad. At least he didn't suffer long.

IMATI:                        He's dead. How does it feel, boy? You just helped kill Pharaoh?

## **SECOND COMMERCIAL**

IMATI:                        At last, Pharaoh is dead. The Greek line is finished. We can put a real Egyptian on the throne. Not a Greek puppet.

KERIDES:                We need to go.

IMATI:                        I need to take something from the body - as proof.

KERIDES:                        If we don't go now, our heads will be on spikes as proof. And one more thing.

FX: A YELP FROM IMATI.

IMATI:                        What are you doing? Is stabbing me with... is that a sewing needle? Is that the best you can manage?

KERIDES:                        Making sure Adrea stays alive. That bodkin was coated with a slow-acting poison. There's a cure but you only get it when Adrea is safe.

IMATI:                        I'll cut your heart out, boy.

KERIDES:                        Then you'll never find out what poison I used and we'll both be dead. It's your choice - just choose quickly. Pharaoh's priests will be here any minute.

IMATI:                        All right.

KERIDES:                        Back down the steps - and act like nothing has happened.

FX: WIND BLOWS. DOOR CREAKS SHUT. FOOTSTEPS ON THE SAND.

IMATI:                        I can't believe we made it out of the Palace. How long until the body is discovered?

KERIDES:                        Not long. Now take me to Adrea. Where is she?

IMATI:                        Jinna will have taken her to a friend's house. My group are meeting there.

KERIDES: Take me there.

IMATI: Don't give me orders, boy. Your woman's life is in my hands.

KERIDES: And yours is in mine. If she's hurt, I'll let the poison take you.

IMATI: There's more to you than I thought.

KERIDES: If it makes you feel any better, it's surprising me as well.

### MUSIC BRIDGE

### FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

IMATI: All right, Kerides. It's in here.

KERIDES: This is Minister Asheb's house.

IMATI: We have friends powerful enough to make taking control of Egypt quite easy. And now enough of this charade. Tell me the poison you used on me and you and the girl will at least die quickly.

KERIDES: I knew I couldn't trust you.

IMATI: Then you're not as smart as I thought or you wouldn't have let me bring you here. My friends will torture the name of the poison from you.

KERIDES: Will they?

IMATI: Or we'll torture the girl until you answer. Maybe we'll do you a favour and rip the tongue from her yapping head.

KERIDES: If she's hurt, I'll...

### FX: SCUFFLE. CHOKING FROM KERIDES.

IMATI: What will you do when we torture her? Maybe I'll choke the answer from you.

### FX: GRUNT FROM KERIDES AND A PUNCH ON IMATI.

IMATI: So there's some fight in you after all, boy. You're not so pathetic after all. Good. I may find a place for you in the new Egypt after all.

KARNAK: New Egypt? Don't you need Pharaoh to be dead for that to happen?

IMATI: Karnak?

KARNAK: That's General Karnak. Men, take the house.

IMATI: What?

KARNAK: Isn't that obvious, even to you? We followed you. Take them all, men.

FX: DOORS CRASHED OPEN. SCREAMS FROM INSIDE.

KERIDES: General, Adrea's in there.

KARNAK: No, she's not.

IMATI: Forget the girl. What do you mean Pharaoh's not dead? I saw him...

MENTEP: You saw what, Imati?

KARNAK: You took your time getting here, Mentep.

MENTEP: I'm not as young as I was. And I had to make sure that the priest who took Pharaoh's place in the temple was all right.

KERIDES: He's unharmed?

MENTEP: He's fine. The drug just put him into a deep sleep. You did well stopping Imati from getting close to the body.

IMATI: What's happening?

KARNAK: Well, tomorrow, you'll be executed. Today, we might as well explain. It'll take my men a few minutes to round up your accomplices.

MENTEP: I hope your men won't beat them a little.

KARNAK: No, my orders were to beat them a lot.

MENTEP: Good. Now where were we? Oh, yes... why isn't Pharaoh dead? Well, quite simple, really.

KARNAK: We knew about your organisation and arranged for you to find the young Thinker here.

MENTEP: We let you think you had a plan to kill Pharaoh, but really, everything followed our plan to track down all of the conspirators.

IMATI: No!

KARNAK: And it worked perfectly. We had to arrange for my men to take the place of certain poison sellers so that when you went with Kerides you didn't buy real poison.

FX: A SCUFFLE.

KARNAK: And now we have all of you.

KERIDES: Except Jinna, his woman. She was at my house with Adrea.  
They should be here.

KARNAK: They will be - in fact, here they are.

ADREA: Move faster, you.

JINNA: How can I? My feet are tied together.

ADREA: Then hop faster.

KARNAK: I've been getting regular reports.

ADREA: Kerides? Vizier Mentep.

MENTEP: Hello, my dear.

KERIDES: What happened?

ADREA: Remember that pot I broke when we tried to escape?

KERIDES: Yes.

ADREA: It was one of a matching pair. They match again.

KERIDES: You smashed it.

ADREA: Right over her head. It must have really hurt. I hope.

KERIDES: Why did you bring her here?

ADREA: I was going to bargain her for you. But I think... I think I don't know what to think.

MENTEP: That was very brave of you.

KARNAK: Brave is when the Thinker explains everything to her. Guard, take Jinna and Imati away.

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: Adrea, in our house... your dress didn't catch that pot. I broke it on purpose. That's how I knew it was your favourite, even in the dark.

ADREA: You? Broke it? On purpose? Why? What for?

KERIDES: So we wouldn't escape.

ADREA: Am I having a really bad dream where you make even less sense than usual?

KERIDES: No. It was all part of our plan, you see.

ADREA: Kerides, you have exactly five seconds to make sense or I'll find a pot to smash over your head.

MENTEP: I think we should help the poor boy.

KARNAK: Do we have to? Usually when I see someone getting that kind of trouble, it's my wife shouting at me. Seeing someone else suffer is a novelty.

MENTEP: The boy helped us catch those traitors. We owe him. Adrea, I think we can explain.

ADREA: I wish someone would! I mean... yes... please? Would somebody explain?

MENTEP: For some months now we've been aware of a group of highly-placed citizens who wanted to assassinate Pharaoh because of his Greek family and put an old Egyptian family on the throne. They wanted to take us back to the old ways. They've been trying to get into the palace for months.

KARNAK: And for months we tried to get someone into their ranks but they knew all of my agents. And then the young Thinker arrived and made a name for himself. Just what I needed.

MENTEP: After he proved himself by helping bring murderers to justice, we knew he was the man for the job. We let it be known he would have access to Pharaoh's palace.

KARNAK: And we made sure it was known that he lived outside of the palace with a young woman. Then we waited for them to contact him.

ADREA: You used me - like a goat staked out to catch jackals.

KERIDES: You were never in any danger.

ADREA: Jinna had a sword and I had a broken pot.

KARNAK: You also had six of my men in your house all the time you were there.

ADREA: What?

MENTEP: Yes, Kerides had no concerns for his own safety but he only agreed to help if we guaranteed that you would not be hurt.

KARNAK: So I had six of my men hidden in your house, protecting you.

ADREA: So why didn't they just capture Imati and Jinna when they came into the house? Your guards... they weren't watching all the time were they?

MENTEP: Don't worry, my dear. They're very discreet.

KARNAK: And the plan we worked out with Kerides...

MENTEP: Actually, Kerides worked most of it out...

KARNAK: Well, that's true. The plan worked. We didn't just catch Imati and Jinna. We caught all of the rebels.

ADREA: I'll never forgive you for not telling me, Kerides.

KARNAK: That was my decision. I take it you won't forgive me either.

ADREA: I don't live with you. I don't have to forgive you.

MENTEP: The order not to tell you came from Pharaoh.

ADREA: Pharaoh? He knows who I am?

MENTEP: Oh, yes. And he will know how brave you were in capturing Jinna - and in bringing her here. He may wish to reward you personally.

ADREA: Oh...

KARNAK: And he will definitely want to reward you, young Thinker. Although you're lucky Imati didn't kill you when you attacked him.

ADREA: Kerides? You had a fight with Imati?

KERIDES: Not much of a fight. And he, well, he threatened you.

ADREA: That's the sweetest, bravest... and stupidest thing you have ever done!

FX: ADREA THUMPS HIM.

ADREA: And thank you. For making sure I was all right.

KERIDES: I should thank you for coming to save me. Nobody ever did anything so brave just for me.

ADREA: (UNCOMFORTABLE AT OPEN SENTIMENT)  
I...well... I... well, you owe me a month's wages.

KERIDES: No I don't.

ADREA: Don't argue. And you'll have to pay me extra - I'll need a new dress if I'm going to meet Pharaoh. You don't want me embarrassing you.

KERIDES: No.

ADREA: So you think I'd embarrass you.

KERIDES: Adrea, I'm not going to argue with you.

ADREA: Yes, you are.

KERIDES: No, I'm not.

ADREA: Got you.

KERIDES: I give up.

MENTEP: Why don't you two head home? You've had a long day.

KERIDES: Thank you, Mentep. I think we will.

ADREA: And we can talk about my dress.

KERIDES: Yes, you will.

MENTEP: I'll look in tomorrow.

FX: FOOTSTEPS OF KERIDES AND ADREA FADING INTO DISTANCE.

ADREA: Now, about that dress... There's a stall in the market... well, I'm not getting it there but there's a shop just opposite...



MENTEP: I'm glad it's not her who tried to take over. We wouldn't have stood a chance.

KARNAK: The Thinker did well. Worst punch I ever saw in my life though.

MENTEP: He'll learn.

KARNAK: We better get back to the palace. I've got traitors to interrogate.

MENTEP: You're looking forward to it.

KARNAK: Perk of the job.

MENTEP: Did you tell Imati that the poison Kerides gave him was just coloured water?

KARNAK: I think it slipped my mind.

MENTEP: Terrible memory you have there... I'm glad to say.

# DEATH OF A PHARAOH

## Notes

In the previous three episodes we had started to show the developing relationship between Kerides and Adrea. At the very least they were friends who had been through a lot together. If you looked more closely, they were beginning to care about each other and things were getting a bit flirty. Despite the fact that the next story is titled Death Over Dinner This was the third in what we called the Death Trio. This was one where we wanted to push Kerides further than we had before and it had to be to protect Adrea.

We also wanted to do something that screamed of Ancient Egypt. It's a show about crime, predominantly murder, so there had to be a victim. Who could be more Egyptian than Pharaoh? According to the villain of this story, a lot of people could. A Greek sitting on the throne of Egypt was not universally popular... and there was the plot. Assassinate the Pharaoh.

We were really concerned that Adrea being captive all through this story could make her appear weak so she had to escape from captivity under her own steam and she had to have a very strong last act, which we gave her.

The sixth episode was a sort of marker for us in the writing of the series. The characters needed to have reached a certain stage in the development by the end of this story. Kerides and Adrea were more or less where we wanted them to be but the real surprise for us was how well rounded and developed Mentep and Karnak had become. They were two of the most powerful men in Egypt, responsible for the commerce, security and political activity in Egypt, but they were also two old friends who clearly got on very well and loved to have a laugh together. That was hinted in early scripts but it has become more prominent because of the way these characters have been played. Characters evolve as actors take the lines, work them and bring them to life. That influences the writing of subsequent scripts. The performances are definitely why Mentep and Karnak have become regulars in almost every episode, and the reason they have had their backgrounds developed as much as they have been.

## KERIDES THE THINKER

## DEATH OVER DINNER

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 18<sup>th</sup> September 2011

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

**KERIDES:** Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good

heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and when we first meet her, a slave. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan.

NEMEK: Owner of a tavern - late 30s? Not the nicest man in all Alexandria, but it's his bar so he makes the rules.

RAMADA: Nemek's wife, similar age. Very ill, lots of gasps and groans.

SARIN: Samaritan healer, female - 30s. Living and practicing her arts in Alexandria.

SERVANT: few lines

GUARD: few lines

FX: WALKING THROUGH ALEXANDRIA.

ADREA: Isn't the city wonderful in the evening, Kerides?

KERIDES: Alexandria is an amazing city at any time, Adrea...

ADREA: Isn't it?

KERIDES: But I do have a question.

ADREA: Isn't it your job to answer the questions? Not mine?

KERIDES: Usually, yes.

ADREA: Then you won't have to ask me any questions will you?

KERIDES: Adrea, where are we going?

ADREA: What make you think we're going somewhere?

KERIDES: Because as soon as I got home, you told me not to take my cloak off and dragged me out again.

ADREA: Maybe I just wanted a walk.

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: Oh, all right! What did you do today?

KERIDES: I went to the Palace to see General Karnak. He didn't have any work for me to do so I was able to spend some time talking with the Palace historians. Did you know there are old writings that speak of Pharaohs missing from all the official texts?

ADREA: And how exactly would I know that? Or care?

KERIDES: You don't think that's interesting?

ADREA: It's no wonder you've never kissed a girl.

KERIDES: What do you mean?

ADREA: You know what I did today?

KERIDES: Not exactly.

ADREA: Cleaned the house, washed your clothes, tidied things away...

same as I did yesterday. And the day before.

KERIDES: Oh.

ADREA: Yes, oh. Every day I do the same thing. You go to the Palace, meet interesting people...

KERIDES: I'm usually talking about criminals and murderers.

ADREA: But they're interesting murderers. When I'm at home. Alone. Bored. I've done the same thing every day for weeks.

KERIDES: You did tell me to take the job working for General Karnak.

ADREA: And when did you start listening to a word I say?  
KERIDES: When did I get a choice?

ADREA: What does that mean?

KERIDES: It means that I've been ignoring you, doesn't it?

ADREA: You catch on quick.

KERIDES: I'm sorry.

ADREA: So am I. I know you have a lot to do and I know I pushed you into this position at the Palace but I didn't think I'd be left on my own all the time. You know I even almost looked forward to our landlady visiting. Well, almost. I just want a break from the routine. This one looks all right.

KERIDES: A tavern?

ADREA: It'd be nice to eat food I didn't cook.

KERIDES: That's true.

ADREA: Are you saying something about my cooking?

KERIDES: Nothing. I can't win. Let's go inside.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

KERIDES: It's quite nice.

ADREA: You don't have to sound so surprised. I wouldn't pick anywhere that was horrible.

KERIDES: Of course not.

NEMEK: Sir, come in. Welcome to my humble tavern.

KERIDES: Thank you...

NEMEK: Nemek, sir. I own the tavern. Please sit.

ADREA: This table looks fine.

NEMEK: You don't want this one. It's too close to the bar. Try this one over here.

ADREA: But it's in the corner.

NEMEK: The couches are the most comfortable I have... and I'm sure a young couple like yourselves would prefer the more... intimate atmosphere here.

KERIDES: Oh, we're not...

ADREA: ...Complaining. We're not complaining. It'll be fine.

NEMEK: Good. Let me fetch you wine. Would you prefer wine from the north or the south?

ADREA: What's the difference?

NEMEK: The wine from the north has a sweeter taste while the one from the south has a slightly bitter tang.

ADREA: Then why would anyone drink it?

KERIDES: Because it gets them drunk quicker.

NEMEK: He's right. The southern wine is much stronger.

ADREA: Oh.

NEMEK: Which would you prefer?

ADREA: Do we look like we want to get drunk?

KERIDES: Definitely the sweet wine from the north.

NEMEK: As you wish. Although I wouldn't blame you if you wanted to get drunk, sir.

ADREA: And what's that supposed to mean?

NEMEK: You've clearly had a long day, sir. I'll get your wine?

ADREA: We're not leaving him a tip. Do you hear me?

KERIDES: I don't have much choice.

ADREA: How did you know about the southern wine being strong? You haven't taken to drinking when you're at the palace, have you?

KERIDES: No. But I was talking with Vizier Mentep and he mentioned the possibility of increasing tax on stronger wine. He thought it might stop people getting drunk and cut down on fights and some of the damage drunks cause.

ADREA: That makes sense.

KERIDES: Why did you stop me saying anything when he called us a couple?

ADREA: Because... well, because I don't know what to call us. Some people think I'm your wife, some think I'm your servant, other people think I'm your slave.

KERIDES: That's odd. When people see us together they usually think I'm the slave.

ADREA: I just want a quiet, relaxing night without anyone asking questions.

KERIDES: I'd like that.

FX: DOOR CREAKS.

RAMADA: Menek.

MENEK: Ramada, why are you here? You should be in bed.

RAMADA: You need help in here.

MENEK: You are ill.

RAMADA: And you will be ill if you try to run this place alone. You have customers waiting at their table and others coming in now.

MENEK: I'll manage.

RAMADA: I'll take these to that young couple. You see to the ones who

just came in.

MENEK: All right. Gentlemen, can I get you wine? The sweet from the North or... ah, you prefer the south.

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

RAMADA: Your wine.

KERIDES: Thank you.

ADREA: Are you all right?

RAMADA: I'm fine. But thank you for asking. Your wife is very kind, sir.

KERIDES: She's not my... yes. She's very kind.

ADREA: Are you sure you're all right?

RAMADA: Yes, I'm... I'm...

(STRUGGLING TO REMAIN FOCUSED)

I'm not sure. I don't... I don't feel...

FX: CLATTER OF RAMADA COLLAPSING.

### **FIRST COMMERCIAL**

FX: CLATTER OF RAMADA COLLAPSING.

ADREA: Catch her, Kerides.

KERIDES: I've got her.

ADREA: Set her on the couch.

KERIDES: There.

MENEK: Ramada! What happened to her? Please, she's my wife. What happened?

ADREA: She brought our wine, then she looked dizzy and collapsed.

MENEK: I told her to stay in bed. Is she...

KERIDES: She's still breathing but her breath is shallow and weak.

MENEK: Will she live?



KERIDES: I'm not a healer.

MENEK: I have heard of a Samaritan woman who lives somewhere in this street. She is a healer. Someone fetch the Samaritan woman. Please hurry.

FX: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING AWAY.

KERIDES: Why did you tell her to stay in bed?

MENEK: She has been ill. For a month now, she has fought for her good health.

ADREA: What's been wrong with her?

MENEK: I am no healer either. I don't know exactly what has ailed her.

KERIDES: But you know the way the illness has shown itself.

ADREA: She has a fever. Somebody bring me water and a cloth. Make the water as pure as you can. And cool.

KERIDES: Other than this fever what signs of sickness has she shown?

MENEK: Pains in her stomach, weakness, no appetite for food. I have had to sit over her to ensure that she would drink.

KERIDES: That could be any of a hundred illnesses.

MENEK: You said you were not a healer.

KERIDES: I'm not but I know a little of the healer's art.

ADREA: He knows a little about everything.

SERVANT: The water, lady.

ADREA: Thank you.

FX: SPLASH OF WATER.

ADREA: This will cool your fever.

FX: SHALLOW, PAINED BREATHING.

ADREA: Kerides.

KERIDES: Yes?

ADREA: Let's give her some quiet.

FX: FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES: (QUIETLY)  
What is it you didn't want her to hear?

ADREA: I've seen people burn with fever, Kerides. I've never seen anyone recover from a fever like this.

MENEK: No. You're wrong. You must be.

ADREA: I'm sorry but it's true.

MENEK: You're not a healer. You must be wrong.

ADREA: I hope so. I really do.

KERIDES: How long will it take the Samaritan physician to get here?

MENEK: A few moments. She is only three doors away.

KERIDES: Let's hope she can help your wife.

FX: DOOR CREAKS.

MENEK: Is this the healer?

SERVANT: Yes, sir.

SARIN: I am Sarin. Your servant gave no details when he demanded that I come.

MENEK: We have no details to give. Can you help her?

ADREA: She's on the couch over here.

SARIN: Let me see her. Yes... her breathing is not good and her heart beats only weakly. The light here is not good. Take her upstairs to your bed chamber.

MENEK: Very well. Help me carry my wife up to our chamber.

SERVANT: Yes, sir.

FX: RAMADA BEING LIFTED.

KERIDES: I'm sorry, I didn't hear your name.

SARIN: I am Sarin.

KERIDES: You're new to Alexandria, too?

SARIN: I have been here only a few months. And it's good that I am here.  
The people in this city need healers.

ADREA: And some of them need manners and a wash.

KERIDES: Adrea?

ADREA: Sorry. That just came out of my mouth. I don't know why.

SARIN: I must get to inn-keeper's wife.

KERIDES: Of course. We'll come with you.

ADREA: They used this door.

FX: FOOTSTEPS. DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

ADREA: Would it hurt to have a lamp for these stairs? I can't see a thing.

KERIDES: Don't worry, I'll catch you if you slip. I've got you.

ADREA: (YELPS)  
It's where you've got me! Move your hand!

KERIDES: Sorry. I didn't see where I was... what I... oh, sorry.

ADREA: You will be. But don't move your hand too far - in case I do trip.

KERIDES: I think this is the top of the stairs. Isn't it?

ADREA: One more. There.

KERIDES: Got it.

ADREA: You can move your hand now.

KERIDES: Right.

ADREA: If you think it's safe.

KERIDES: Maybe I should keep hold of you - until there are some lights.

SARIN: Oh, for Ra's sake. Get out of the way.

KERIDES:            Sorry.

SARIN:            This door.

FX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

NEMEK:            Come in. Please. She's still breathing.

SARIN:                      Light every lamp in the room. I need to see her properly.

FX: FLICKERING FLAME

SARIN:                      Her breathing is very weak. Her heart is slowing. The woman is very weak. Does she eat and drink regularly?

NEMEK:                      Not for many days. There is always wine by her bed but I have to force her to drink anything.

SARIN:                      There are many illnesses which steal the appetite and the urge to drink. Her belly is tender and her throat is swollen. This will cause pain when she swallows so she will not have wanted to eat or drink. Her mouth is very dry. You must make her drink.

NEMEK:            I will.

ADREA:            Is this her wine?

NEMEK:            Yes.

ADREA:                      Ugh. No wonder she won't drink - this is sour. It smells vile.

NEMEK:                      It has been here all day. I will get her some fresh.

ADREA:                      I'll do it. Fetching and carrying is my lot in life.

NEMEK:            No. This is my place.

ADREA:                      Your place is with your wife. Wouldn't you say?

SARIN:            She's right.

NEMEK:                      Very well. Use the jar of wine at the bottom of the stairs. We use a different jar for ourselves than we sell to the public.

ADREA:            Kerides, you can hold this while I'm gone.

KERIDES: A goblet of sour wine? Thank you.

NEMEK: Don't drink it.

ADREA: I won't be long.

SARIN: The fever is burning her. Open the shutters to let the breeze blow the foul air out and cool her.

KERIDES: I'll do that.

FX: SHUTTERS OPEN.

KERIDES: You can see the whole street from this window.

NEMEK: Good for seeing customers coming. That's what Ramada always says.

FX: RAMADA'S BREATHING BECOMING RAGGED.

NEMEK: She's getting worse.

FX: DOOR OPENS.

ADREA: I have the wine.

KERIDES: That was quick.

ADREA: There's only one jar down there. It was easy to find. Here.

NEMEK: Thank you.

SARIN: No. Give it to me. I'll do it.

FX: GOBLET HANDED OVER.

SARIN: The swelling makes inside her throat much narrower. If the wine is poured into her mouth she will choke.

FX: RUMMAGING AND A PIECE OF CLOTH DUNKED IN WINE.

SARIN: I learned from a Greek physician that if a fine cloth such as this was soaked in liquid, it could trickle onto a swollen throat. It will also wet these dried lips.

KERIDES: I've heard of this practice.

SARIN: Are you a healer?

KERIDES: No.

SARIN: Then who are you? A family friend?

NEMEK: No, these were customers in my tavern. They showed great kindness and helped when Ramada became ill.

SARIN: Kindness is in short supply in Alexandria. You are most unusual people.

ADREA: Thank you. I think.

FX: RAMADA'S BREATHING LEVELS OFF.

SARIN: There. The wine is dripping into her throat. It should help her. Later I will make a thin broth. I will feed her the same way.

FX: RAMADA GASPS. VIOLENTLY.

NEMEK: Ramada?

FX: GASPING IS DESPERATE, VIOLENT. THRASHING ARMS AND LEGS.

ADREA: What's happening?

SARIN: I'm not sure. Hold her down. Hold her arms and legs.

KERIDES: Got her.

ADREA: Hold her tighter.

SARIN: Hold her. She'll hurt herself with this thrashing around.

NEMEK: Ramada. Ramada! It's all right. Calm yourself. Ramada!

SARIN: Hold her firmly.

FX: THE THRASHING SLOWS AND STOPS.

NEMEK: It's working. She's calmed now.

KERIDES: I don't think so.

NEMEK: She's stopped thrashing. She's... Ramada? Ramada? No! Ramada?

KERIDES: I'm sorry. I'm afraid she's dead.

SECOND COMMERCIAL

NEMEK: She can't be dead. She can't. I won't let her.

ADREA: I'm sorry.

NEMEK: It can't be true.

SARIN: I'm sorry, Nemek. If she had been able to eat or drink she might have had the strength to fight her illness. There was nothing we could do to help her.

NEMEK: She is sleeping, that's all.

ADREA: She has moved on to the afterlife, that's all.

NEMEK: It can't be like this.

SARIN: We should get him away from this room.

KERIDES: You're right. Here, I'll hold the goblet and you take him downstairs. I think he needs your help more than his wife now.

SARIN: Very well. Come with me. You can't stay here.

NEMEK: I must. I can't leave.

SARIN: People in the tavern need you. And you must have the trade so that Ramada can take worthy possessions into the next life.

NEMEK: You're right. I know. Yes, you're right.

FX: FOOTSTEPS. DOOR CREAKS.

ADREA: Come on, Kerides. We should... what are you doing?

FX: KERIDES SNIFFING.

ADREA: Will you stop that?

KERIDES: Adrea, are you sure this wine you brought came from the correct jar?

ADREA: Of course I am. It's the only one set aside for the household. Why?

KERIDES:               Probably nothing.

FX: FOOTSTEPS. MORE SNIFFING.

ADREA:                       Will you stop? You can't go around sniffing the mouths of dead women. She's not even cold yet. What will people say if they see you? Worse than that, what will they say if they see me with you?

KERIDES:               I thought so.

ADREA:               No. Kerides, no.

KERIDES:               What?

ADREA:               You've found something, haven't you?

KERIDES:               I think so.

ADREA:                       We can't even go out to eat without you turning this into... into what, by the way?

KERIDES:               I think Ramada didn't die of any fever.

ADREA:               Of course she did. Didn't she?

KERIDES:               I don't think so.

ADREA:               Then what did she die of?

KERIDES:               I'll explain it downstairs.

SLIGHT MUSICAL BRIDGE.

FX: CREAK OF A DOOR. SOBBING.

SARIN:               There you are.

KERIDES:                       I thought we should close the room to give her respect.

SARIN:               That's very thoughtful of you.

NEMEK:               Yes, thank you.

KERIDES:               You sent everyone home.

NEMEK:               It was for the best.





KERIDES: I really don't want to interrupt.

ADREA: Kerides, if you don't ask, I will.

SARIN: Have you two no respect for this man? His wife has just died and you two bicker?

KERIDES: I've sorry.

ADREA: So am I. I suppose. But Kerides does have a question.

SARIN: Then ask it and be done.

KERIDES: Nemek, you asked everyone who comes into your tavern - including Adrea and myself - what kind of wine they would like to drink. The sweet wine from the north or the bitter...

ADREA: And strong...

KERIDES: Yes, and strong, wine from the south.

NEMEK: I ask everybody that question the first time they come into my tavern.

KERIDES: Yes, but you didn't ask Sarin which kind of wine she wanted a few moments ago.

NEMEK: I'm sure I did.

KERIDES: You didn't. I only asked for the toast to see if you would or not.

NEMEK: What?

KERIDES: You see, I know your wife didn't die of a fever.

ADREA: We know you murdered her, and we know how. Well, Kerides knows how, but he'll explain it in a minute.

NEMEK: That is a foul accusation.

KERIDES: But a true one.

NEMEK: You had better have proof to back your words or I will call for a palace guard.

KERIDES: To begin with, I thought your wife had simply died of a fever as you hoped everyone would. It wouldn't come as a surprise to anyone. You had let everybody know that she had been ill with a fever for a month. Except it wasn't a fever. You were simply poisoning her slowly. A little at a time so that everyone would think her death was an unfortunate illness.

NEMEK: That is absurd! Where would I find poison?

KERIDES: From your lover, Sarin. As a healer she would know all about poisons. And about how much of them would be needed to slowly kill an unsuspecting woman like Ramada.

SARIN: We are not lovers, you idiot boy.

KERIDES: I think you are. But I'll come back to that. The wine you had by Ramada's bedside was the strong, bitter wine from the south. But the wine Adrea found for the family was a sweet wine from the north. I wondered why they would be different. And then I remembered what you said when you sent for a healer, Nemek. You said you had heard that there was a healer in the street. You were vague about her, but later you admitted that she lived only three doors away. You knew exactly where she had lived so why were you so vague about her earlier unless it was deliberate? And then there is your window... it looks out into the street... but the next two buildings are both only on ground level. The next building is three doors away, and your bedchamber looks into another room on an equal height - Sarin's bed-chamber?

ADREA: Is that how you first saw her? Looking into her bedchamber at night? You're not just a murderer. You're a pervert as well!

NEMEK: This is nonsense.

KERIDES: I could be wrong. That's not really enough for you to be found guilty in a court.

NEMEK: Then get out of my tavern and never come back or I will kill you, boy.

KERIDES: I said that wasn't enough to convict you. But it was very strange that when we got to the top of the stairs, Sarin knew which way to go to your bedchamber even though there were two other doors and they were all closed. It was as if she knew the house already. Maybe she had been here before.

ADREA: Or you'd talked about it - maybe some murder for pillow talk. You two are lovers, aren't you? You a murderer, a pervert and an adulterer. Especially a pervert.

KERIDES:  
respectability.

You killed Ramada so you could be with Sarin and keep your

SARIN: This is all speculation and supposition. A wild theory thrown together out of easily explained mistakes in your thinking.

KERIDES: That's very true. None of what I said will find you guilty. But you murdered her and used us as your alibi.

SARIN: Get out.

KERIDES: I have to toast you. You played us well.

NEMEK: I have no idea what you're talking about... but if sharing a drink with you will make you leave...

KERIDES: To you.

FX: DRINKING.

NEMEK: Ugh. This wine is bitter.

ADREA: It should be. It's the wine you were using to poison your wife.

NEMEK: What?

ADREA: If you start to become ill - even a little bit - that will be proof that you're guilty.

NEMEK: Sarin?

SARIN: Be quiet, Nemek. You won't become ill.

ADREA: But the way you reacted proved that you're guilty.

KERIDES: But what will convict you both is the goblet of wine that was by Ramada's bedside. Oh, that isn't it, really.

ADREA: We're not that stupid. Kerides had that sent to the palace. Your own servant is taking it.

KERIDES: I'm sure there are people at the palace who can find out what kind of poison was in the wine - I assume that you put it in the sour wine to hide the taste better. That means it was a poison with a bitter taste. That should make it easier for them to

narrow it down. And Sarin, your part will be proved by that cloth you used to feed wine into Ramada's mouth. I think examination will prove that the cloth has been soaked in a poison which smells of almonds. You murdered her in front of our eyes and I was so stupid I didn't see it until too late.

NEMEK: You are an idiot, boy.

KERIDES: Usually it's Adrea who calls me that.

ADREA: And usually I'm right.

NEMEK: You would be right this time. If I killed my wife, why would I think twice about killing you?

KERIDES: Oh. I didn't think of that.

ADREA: What do you mean? You must have thought of that. You're the Thinker. That's what they call you. You always have a plan.

KERIDES: Not this time.

NEMEK: I'll gut you like a pig and then your woman can die.

KERIDES: Are you sure you want to do that? I'm quite sure I don't want you to. In fact I'm positive about it.

FX: CHAIR SHOVED ACROSS THE FLOOR.

NEMEK: You can't escape. The doors are locked.

KERIDES: I know, but when I said I didn't have a plan...

SARIN: Nemek, behind you...

FX: A CRASH OF POTTERY.

KERIDES: ...I didn't mention that Adrea did.

FX: ANOTHER CRASH OF POTTERY.

ADREA: You deserve worse for what you did. And so do you, Sarin.

FX: DOOR SHOVED OPEN. HEAVY FOOTSTEPS.

NEMEK: (IN PAIN)  
Guard, these people tried to kill me.

GUARD: What should I do with them, sir?

NEMEK: Take them. Kill them.  
(NO ANSWER)  
Kill them!

ADREA: He wasn't talking to you.

KERIDES: Take them to the palace. They can face justice for what they did.

GUARD: Yes, sir.

ADREA: Didn't we mention that Kerides works for General Karnak? General Karnak at Pharaoh's palace? You've heard of Pharaoh - he's really famous.

SARIN: I did nothing. It was all his doing. Menek killed his wife.

MENEK: Sarin?

SARIN: He would have killed me if I hadn't helped.

KERIDES: Take them. Let the judge decide.

FX: VILLAINS DRAGGED AWAY.

SARIN: This is unfair. He did it.

MENEK: Sarin? You said you loved me. Sarin?

ADREA: I should have known.

KERIDES: What?

ADREA: We can't even visit a tavern for food without you finding a murder. People are definitely going to talk about you.

KERIDES: Sorry.

ADREA: Which idiot decided we were coming out to eat tonight anyway?

KERIDES: I'm sure I don't remember.

ADREA: That's the best answer you came up with all day. Come on, let's go home. I can teach you something useful there.

KERIDES:            You can?

ADREA:  
change. Come on.

How to cook. Then you can take your turn and cook for me for a

## DEATH OVER DINNER

### Notes

Despite the title, this is not one of the Death Trio of script. At one point it was called Death of a Date and Death of a Really Nice Night Out. We were right to change it.

This was a standalone story, meant to be quite lightweight and to add to Adrea's growing frustration that everywhere they went Kerides would drag them into some kind of mystery or foul scheme. I think it was Claire who suggested that Adrea and Kerides couldn't even manage a quiet dinner without him tripping over a dead body. I like that idea so we ran with it, asking the usual sort of questions. Where would they have dinner? Who else would be there? Who could be the victim? How could a murder be committed? How did they try to hide it? How does Kerides work it out?

Over coffee and cake we discussed murder again. The people who worked in the shop must have thought we were weirdos, discussing the best way to murder a patron in a restaurant.

We thought it might be fun if this was a sort of first date for Kerides and Adrea, which made us think of them finding a relationship at the other end of its life. It's not something we hammered home but it's definitely something we talked about.

In the end this one wasn't as jolly and light as we had hoped. We're very fond of it, though.

## KERIDES THE THINKER

## RETURN OF THE QUEEN

by Iain McLaughlin & Claire Bartlett

first aired 19<sup>th</sup> February 2012

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

KERIDES: Early 20s, exceptionally bright in many ways but also a bit innocent in some of the ways of the world. His years of travelling and learning haven't prepared him for Alexandria. A good heart, honest. Gets excited when the ideas are flowing.

ADREA: 18 or 19. Pretty, feisty and, in her own way, more than a match for Kerides. She's intelligent, knows the city and all of the gossip in it. She likes a good moan. Often about not being a slave anymore.

MENTEP: A Vizier at the court of Pharaoh Ptolemy II. He's old and widely respected. Anyone who takes his age for a sign of weakness makes a huge mistake. A very astute man.

KARNAK: General in Pharaoh's army and head of Palace security. More of a policeman than army. Very astute though he pretends just to be a soldier.



CARIMA/ERIMEM: A charlatan soothsayer in the markets of Alexandria... or an uncrowned female Pharaoh from over a millennia ago who has found a way to travel in time. Early 20s.

ONACIOS: Hellenic mercenary officer. He is in his 30s, a hard opponent

SOLDIER Hellenic soldier - any age. (a few lines only)

FX: WALKING THROUGH ALEXANDRIA. BUSY. A BAZAAR.

ADREA: Isn't this nice, Kerides?

KERIDES: The market? It's here every month, Adrea.

ADREA: Yes, but usually when you're here you're up to your knees in some crime or other. You just can't seem move without stepping into a bit of villainy of some sort.

KERIDES: That's hardly fair, Adrea.

MENTEP: But it's true, Kerides.

KERIDES: Vizier Mentep. You startled me.

MENTEP: It's good to know I can still surprise people. And Adrea's right, Kerides. You do have a way of finding the most terrible trouble.

KERIDES: I think trouble finds me.

MENTEP: There is a lot of crime in Alexandria, I suppose.

ADREA: But that doesn't mean he has to go looking for it.

KERIDES: I don't... do I?

ADREA: Do I really need to answer that? Really?

KERIDES: So what brings you to the market, Vizier?

MENTEP: I do wish you'd just call me Mentep. Never mind. Anyway, I always try to visit the market. Apparently it's good for business for the Vizier to be seen in the bazaar from time to time. What about you?

KERIDES: Adrea thought we might find bargains.

ADREA: If you paid me more I wouldn't have to look for bargains.

KERIDES:               Wouldn't you?

ADREA:                       Well of course I would. Finding bargains is why shopping is so much fun.

MENTEP:                   Adrea, do you know my wife, by any chance? She says the same to me.

ADREA:                   Men just don't understand - not even you smart ones.

KERIDES:               What's that fuss over there?

ADREA:               Ooh, a sandals stall.

MENTEP:               I think he means what's happening next to the sandals stall.

ADREA:               Oh. Pity. What is it anyway?

MENTEP:               Looks like a soothsayer of some sort.

KERIDES:               Sounds interesting.

MENTEP:               Let's take a look.

ADREA:               Must we? Most of these soothsayers are fakes.

KERIDES:               I think it looks interesting.

ADREA:                       I wonder why? Most soothsayers are fakes but most of them aren't 20 and look like... well, like her.

MENTEP:                   I'm sure she has some very interesting things to say. Excuse me.

KERIDES:               I hope so. May we pass? Excuse me.

ADREA:                       I doubt it. But if I leave it to you two we'll never find out. Move. Coming through. Move. Important people here. Move.

MENTEP:               She has a way of getting things done.

KERIDES:               That's one way to describe it.

MENTEP:               Be grateful. She got us through the crowd.

ADREA:  
Vizier Mentep.

Although I think this is a waste of time. With respect, of course,

MENTEP: Absolutely. Let's hear what she's saying.

CARIMA: (DRAMATIC, DRUMMING UP TRADE)

The spirits speak. Those of us who can listen hear the messages from those who have moved into the next life. Speak to those you love again, share your memories with them, seek guidance from them. Join me and be with your loved ones again. Death is not the great barrier. Let Madame Carima bring your loved ones to you.

ADREA: What a load of camel dung.

MENTEP: She's putting on a very good performance.

KERIDES: She's really selling it.

ADREA: But it's still camel dung.

CARIMA: You sir... who have you lost? Or you, madam? Were you close to your mother? Would you not pay this small amount to talk with her again?

ADREA: This is terrible. Let's go buy sandals.

FX: CARIMA GASPS. A SUDDEN, VIOLENT SOUND.

ADREA: It's just part of her show.

FX: CARIMA GASPING,, WHEEZING AND GROANING LOUDLY.

KERIDES: I'm not so sure.

MENTEP: I think Kerides is right. Keep back, everybody. Give her space.  
Let her breathe.

FX: CARIMA THRASHES AND SCREAMS.

MENTEP: Hold her down in case she hurts herself.

KERIDES: We've got her.

ADREA: What's wrong with her?

MENTEP: I don't know. Hold her.

KERIDES: She's calming

ADREA: She's stopped struggling.

FX: CARIMA DRAWS A DEEP GASPING BREATH.

MENTEP: And she's breathing. That's something.

ADREA: I think she's coming round.

CARIMA: (NOW FORMAL, STRONG, REGAL - ASSURED)  
Release me.

KERIDES: Are you hurt? Do you need a physician?

CARIMA: I said, release me. The Doctor I need you cannot bring me.

MENTEP: Let her up.

ADREA: All right.

CARIMA: I am a little dizzy... my voice... is that my voice?

ADREA: Who else's would it be?

CARIMA: (TESTING THE VOICE)  
I hear thy voice, O turtle dove-  
The dawn is all aglow-  
Weary am I with love, with love,  
Oh, whither shall I go?  
It is not an unpleasant voice.

KERIDES: How do you feel, Madame Carima?

CARIMA: I am not Carima.

ADREA: I knew it was just a name she used to sound more interesting.

CARIMA: Carima is no longer in this body. I have taken control of it from her for a time.

MENTEP: Have you indeed?

ADREA: Oh, great, this was all part of her act? People will think we're in on it.

CARIMA: Does your tongue never stop prattling? I have sent my spirit through the ages to take control of this body because I need help.

KERIDES: Help? To do what?

CARIMA: To save Egypt, what else?

MENTEP: You're going to save Egypt?

CARIMA: I have done so before.

MENTEP: Indeed?

CARIMA: Indeed! I am Erimemushinteperem, uncrowned Pharaoh of the Two Kingdoms, and you are Vizier Mentep. The boy is Kerides and I have passed through the centuries to find you both.

### **FIRST COMMERCIAL**

#### FX: CRACKLING TORCHES.

KARNAK: Mentep, I can't believe you brought the girl here to the Palace.

ADREA: Neither can I. She's faking - or crazy.

KERIDES: Adrea...

KARNAK: Let her speak, Young Thinker. I agree with her.

MENTEP: I knew you would, Karnak, my old friend. You are a soldier.  
And a fine one.

KARNAK: You don't believe that nonsense about her being a Pharaoh who travelled through the centuries to take over a soothsayer's body and save Egypt.

MENTEP: I admit it's a difficult story to believe.

KERIDES: But you do?

MENTEP: I don't dismiss it.

KARNAK: Why not? Dismiss it and throw the girl in the dungeons.

MENTEP: I will not ignore centuries of culture and belief simply because it is a difficult story to accept. My friend, the Pharaoh Erimemushinteperem is all but unknown to history. Her reign was brief and his disappearance mysterious. Later Pharaohs rewrote historical texts to remove her. Very few know of her existence and fewer still - I would put the number at less than the fingers on my hands - know that this mysterious Pharaoh was a girl. Less still know that she was uncrowned.

KARNAK: Keep talking.

MENTEP: Kerides, do you remember the poem she recited?  
KERIDES: A little, but I don't know it. But love poetry isn't something  
I've studied.

ADREA: It shows. Sorry - did I say that out loud?

MENTEP: I'm not surprised you don't know the poem - it's over a  
thousand years old, coming from the era of Erimemushinteperem around 1200 years ago.

KARNAK: I'm still not convinced.

MENTEP: Neither am I. But she knew who Kerides and I were... we  
should talk with our young Pharaoh.

KARNAK: We should tell Pharaoh Ptolemy of this girl.

MENTEP: Not yet. If she is the charlatan we believe, we would look like  
fools. If she is genuine... then we must find why she is here.

FX: PACING. TORCHES CRACKLING.

CARIMA: Fools! Open this door.

FX: THUMPING ON THE DOOR.

CARIMA: Open the door. I did not travel the centuries to be locked in a  
cell!

FX: MORE THUMPING.

CARIMA: Open this door.

FX: HEAVY DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

KARNAK: I'd hardly call this a cell. These are some of our finest guest  
quarters.

CARIMA: Am I able to leave? No? Then it is a cell. Who are you?

KARNAK: Don't you know?

CARIMA: If I knew I would not have to ask, would I?

MENTEP: You knew Kerides and myself.

CARIMA: You are important. This blunt sword is not.

KARNAK: Mind your tongue, girl, while you still have it.

CARIMA: But if I must guess then I would assume that you are General Karnak, head of the palace security.

KARNAK: You would assume correctly. Now can you tell me why I shouldn't throw you in a dungeon and leave you to rot?

CARIMA: Because you love Egypt as much as I do. And if you think there is any way I can help you protect it then you will not throw me into a dungeon.

MENTEP: She has you there, Karnak.

KARNAK: True. But if you are a great Pharaoh from the past with the power to travel through centuries and take over this girl's body... why do you need our help?

CARIMA: While I wear this form I have no more power than the girl whose body it really is.

KARNAK: That's hardly an answer likely to convince me.

KERIDES: May I ask a question?

CARIMA: Please do.

KARNAK: He was asking me.

CARIMA: Ask your question.

KARNAK: Go ahead.

KERIDES: You talk about a threat to Egypt. What is the threat?

CARIMA: Egypt now is not the same country I knew, I know this. But now, as in my own age, she has enemies at her borders.

KERIDES: Everybody knows that.

KARNAK: Which enemy are you talking about?

CARIMA: The Hellenic Empire of Antiochus Soter.

MENTEP: It's true that Antiochus and his Seleuchian Empire have a grievance with Egypt. They claim our territory of Coele-Syria belongs to them and we believe they have been fomenting rebellion in the south of Egypt, particularly in Thebes.

CARIMA: Thebes is the heart of Egypt. It will always remain loyal.

KERIDES: Things are a little different in Egypt now than when you were here.

KARNAK: If you are who you claim to be.

MENTEP: Antiochus is planning to move against us. Is this the extent of the threat you came to warn us about?

CARIMA: No. He has sent a group of men to Thebes. They are to find a tomb and remove the immense riches from it. The treasure will be traded for the disputed territory... and if your Pharaoh refuses, it will be used to pay for mercenaries in the coming attack on Egypt.

MENTEP: Where is this tomb?

CARIMA: In the great Valley where the Kings lie in rest.

KERIDES: The tombs in the Valley of the Kings have all been looted, long ago.

CARIMA: This one has not. And it will remain untouched for thousands of years. But only if this threat is defeated.

KARNAK: Can you offer any proof to back up what you say?

CARIMA: I know the exact location of the tomb within the Valley. I will take you there,

KARNAK: And how exactly do you know where the tomb is?

CARIMA: Because it is my tomb. Mine and my three brothers. The riches inside are ours. I will not see them used against my country. And I will not have my brothers' tomb defiled.

KERIDES: Vizier Mentep... I have never heard of this tomb being mentioned in any documents.

MENTEP: No... and very few people knew of the three dead brothers. Carima...

CARIMA: I am not Carima. You may call me Erimem.

MENTEP: Very well... Erimem. Why were your brothers placed in the tomb with you?



CARIMA: Because they deserved to rest with the kings. They were my brothers and I love them. I became Pharaoh only after they were all murdered. When we were all betrayed. My chamber was added after I... after I left.

MENTEP: Would you care to tell us how you left?

CARIMA: Some secrets I should retain for myself.

KARNAK: You know something? I don't believe a word you've said. And you've offered nothing as proof.

CARIMA: But nonetheless, we will travel to Thebes and the great Valley, won't we, Mentep? Because you believe in your heart that I know things only Erimem would know.

KARNAK: Mentep?

MENTEP: I don't know... Kerides?

KERIDES: I believe in science and things I can prove, so I know nothing of unknown Pharaohs travelling in time... but she does know many things that an uneducated charlatan shouldn't know.

ADREA: You can't believe what she's saying.

KERIDES: But I can't prove she's a fake either.

MENTEP: Nor can I... that's why we will be travelling south to Thebes...

KARNAK: Mentep, you can't...

MENTEP: General, prepare your men to travel. Get them ready for battle. Please don't force me to make that an order, old friend.

KARNAK: As you wish - but this is madness.

FX: KARNAK STOMPS OFF. DOOR SHUTS HEAVILY.

CARIMA: Thank you, Vizier.

MENTEP: If you are not who you claim to be, then I will not be able to protect you from General Karnak.

CARIMA: Then it is well that I am exactly who I claim to be. When will we travel?

MENTEP: Probably tomorrow.

CARIMA: That is acceptable. I will need fresh clothing. I prefer a man's clothing. Dresses get in the way during battle.

MENTEP: I'll have some delivered.

CARIMA:            You may go.

ADREA: May we? That's kind of you.

KERIDES:           Adrea, we should go.

MENTEP: Probably wise, Goodnight, Eri... Pharaoh.

CARIMA: Vizier.

FX: FOOTSTEPS THEN DOOR CREAKS CLOSED.

CARIMA: (TO HERSELF) You don't believe me - but don't disbelieve either... that's close enough.

**FX: FOOTSTEPS.**

MENTEP: Kerides, a moment, please.

KERIDES: Of course, Vizier.

MENTEP: You will journey with us to Thebes. We will travel by boat along the Nile in the morning.

KERIDES: Of course. I'll be ready.

MENTEP: Good, we will need your quick wits. I will take every piece of information we have on Erimem with us on the journey for you to study. And I have a favour to ask.

KERIDES: Anything.

MENTEP: Not of you, my boy. I must ask Adrea for her assistance.

ADREA: Me? What can I do?

MENTEP: I want you to come with us to Thebes. Get to know Carima - or

Erimem - whoever she is, I want you to get to know her. If she lets slip anything suspicious in any way, let me know.

KERIDES: That could be dangerous.

MENTEP: I know, but I trust that we can protect her. You are the best chance we have of luring her into unguarded moments. Adrea. Will you do it?

ADREA: I'm probably going to regret this... but yes. I'll do it. We'd better go home and pack some clothes, Kerides - we're going to Thebes.

## SECOND COMMERCIAL

### FX: LAPPING OF WATER.

KARNAK: Mentep, how long will this journey last?

MENTEP: Sea-sick, Karnak?

KARNAK: I'm a soldier. I like my feet on solid ground. The idea of six days on a boat makes me uncomfortable. Have you been talking with our new Pharaoh?

MENTEP: I have... and you've been avoiding her. Which is quite an achievement on a boat this small.

KARNAK: Why would I talk to her? I don't believe anything she's saying.

MENTEP: You surprise me, old friend. I would have thought that you would have taken the chance to study a potential enemy.

KARNAK: Study a whelp of a girl?

MENTEP: If she really is Erimem... she led the entire Egyptian army in battle at Giza against mercenary forces. She fought in the heart of the battle.

KARNAK: But she's not this Erimem. She can't be. Can she?

MENTEP: I don't know. There are things in this world that I can't explain. But if she is, we should know more about her. If she's not...

KARNAK: Then why is she here? Have you considered that this could be a trap?

MENTEP: Oh, yes. I assume that's why you sent so many troops ahead of us in secret last night.

KARNAK: Not as secretly as I'd have hoped, obviously.

MENTEP: It will be time for me to retire the day anyone manages to move that many troops from the palace without me knowing.

KARNAK: She knew your name. She came looking for you. If Antiochus took you captive, he could barter you.

MENTEP: I've thought of that, too. That's why I'm so pleased I didn't have to suggest you send troops on ahead.

KARNAK: We've known each other a long time. I'd hate to lose you. It would take too long for me to train a new Vizier.

MENTEP: Thank you, old friend.

KARNAK: Where is the girl now?

MENTEP: In the cabin below with Adrea.

KARNAK: You've given Adrea a big job.

MENTEP: I know. But she's intelligent and brave. And she has spent time in the markets and with slaves. She will recognise a liar when she sees one.

KARNAK: I hope you're right.

MENTEP: So do I.

FX: FLICKERING LIGHT. DOOR OPENS.

CARIMA: Adrea.

ADREA: Hello. Car... Erim... look, what do I call you?

CARIMA: What do you want to call me? Apart from an impostor. You have been trying to trip me up since we met.

ADREA: I thought you'd be mad about that.

CARIMA: If I was in your position I would not believe that I am the Pharaoh Erimem either. So no, I am not angry.

ADREA: I would be.

CARIMA: I am more annoyed about this body I am wearing. She is not made for battle. My own body is smaller. I am surprised she doesn't fall over with these...

FX: ADREA LAUGHS.

CARIMA: Are you really angry that you are no longer a slave?

ADREA: That depends. Are you going to tell Kerides the answer? Wait, how did you know about that?

CARIMA: I know a great deal about Mentep, about Kerides, about you. That is why I chose you to help me.

ADREA: If you're a god, why do you need us?

CARIMA: Do you really believe that Pharaohs are living gods?

ADREA: How should I know? I wash clothes and clean a house for a living.

CARIMA: But without you, what would Kerides be?

ADREA: What do you know about me?

CARIMA: I cannot tell you.

ADREA: Why not?

CARIMA: Because the future is out there for you to find, not for me to ruin it by telling you when you will marry your husband, how many children you will have, which lands you will journey to...

ADREA: I'm going to travel? I hate travelling. Wait a minute. What do you mean children? I don't like children. They're noisy and they take a lot of looking after. I already have Kerides for that.

CARIMA: Then you are going to have many reasons to be unhappy.

ADREA: Oh. That's... that's unexpected.

CARIMA: But only if I am who I claim to be.

ADREA: You could be telling me this to make me think you know my future. To persuade me.

CARIMA: Because Vizier Mentep brought you along to gain my confidence.

ADREA: No. I'm... oh, all right. How did you know?

CARIMA:

It was obvious really. It's what I would have done in his place.

ADREA: Oh.  
(BEAT)

These children you talk about... do I know their father yet?

CARIMA: Oh, yes.

ADREA: I do? Is he close by? At all?

CARIMA: Yes. Who would have believed Mentep could father so many children so late in life?

ADREA: What? Mentep? You're joking.

CARIMA: (BEAT)  
Yes.

ADREA: Oh, thank the gods.

FX: THEY BOTH LAUGH - A BONDING MOMENT.

CARIMA: And the father of your children?

FX: DOOR CREAKS.

KERIDES: Hello.

ADREA: Kerides?

KERIDES: You might both like to come up on deck.

CARIMA: Why?

KERIDES: We're going to be going ashore for a while.

ADREA: General Karnak feeling sick again?

KERIDES: I couldn't say.

FX: HORSES WHINNEY, SNORT.

KARNAK: You're probably wondering why we're riding inland, Carima.

CARIMA: No.

KARNAK: You're not even a little curious?

CARIMA: You are taking me to the great pyramids, to see how I react. Because you will know that I wore the blue battle crown in battle on the plains of Giza. Should I tell you of our march north through the desert? Of how we set our battle line in front of the great Sphinx. That even though we were outnumbered we defeated the mercenary army. That I disappeared less than a month after the battle at Giza? You will have researched my life.

KARNAK: As best we could. You were all but removed from the history texts.

CARIMA: Why would anyone do that?

KARNAK: You're older than me, you should know. Where were your lines set?

CARIMA: The first line was just in front of the Sphinx so we would have the advantage of higher ground.

KARNAK: Sensible.

CARIMA: And our archers would be able to fire further than theirs. We had barricades set to slow their chariots and we had dug some randomly placed holes to damage their chariots too.

KARNAK: Good tactics.

CARIMA: I cannot claim them. My general - my friend - Antranak, set out our tactics. I miss him. I think you and he are very alike.

KARNAK: We'll see.

FX: HORSES.

ADREA: She's comfortable on a horse.

MENTEP: She certainly rides like a Pharaoh. Straight back and proud.

KERIDES: Erimem was noted as a great horsewoman.

MENTEP: Have you ever read of a pharaoh who wasn't?

KERIDES: That's true.

ADREA: Hey. What's that? Back towards the river.

KERIDES: It looks like smoke.

MENTEP: That's coming from our ships. Karnak! Karnak!

KARNAK: What is it? That must be our ships!

CARIMA: They're on fire. We must get back to them.

KARNAK: Back to the ships.

FX: HORSES WHINNEY.

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FX: SOUND OF BURNING, SHOUTING. HORSES APPROACH FAST.

SHOUTING: Fire! The ships are burning!

FX: HORSES PULL TO A STOP.

KARNAK: All three ships are on fire.

ADREA: All our stuff is on the ship!

KERIDES: Adrea, stop.

ADREA: Let me go, Kerides.

KERIDES: Adrea! Wait!

CARIMA: We need the boats! It will take too long to travel by land.

KARNAK: We can't save the boats.

CARIMA: Not all but we can save one, perhaps two. Move them apart and try to save the ships heaviest with arms and provisions. Form the troops into lines to pass water to put out the fire. What are you waiting for? Do it!

KERIDES: He doesn't need to, do you, General?

KARNAK: How did you know?

KERIDES: The smoke is the wrong colour for the wood our boats are made of. They burn with a much darker smoke. And besides, I don't think all three ships are likely to have caught fire in exactly the same place. They're all smoking from their holds and nowhere else.



ADREA: So what's this all about?

CARIMA: I would like to know that too.

MENTEP: A test, Karnak?

KARNAK: I wanted to see how our Pharaoh would react.

CARIMA: And?

MENTEP: Did she pass?

KARNAK: She acted like a leader.

MENTEP: You sound disappointed.

FX: A SLAP.

CARIMA: Are your games finished?

KARNAK: She hits like a warrior.

MENTEP: A pharaoh's reaction, Karnak?

CARIMA: Set sail. We have wasted enough time.

KARNAK: What do you think, Mentep?

MENTEP: That we should sail for Thebes.

### **THIRD COMMERCIAL**

FX: TIMBERS CREAKING. SLOW BREATHING.

ADREA: Kerides. Kerides, are you awake?

FX: BREATHING, SLOW AND EASY.

ADREA: Kerides... oh, why am I waiting?

FX: A THUMP AS ADREA GOES ROUTE 1 TO WAKE HIM.

ADREA: Kerides! Are you awake?

KERIDES: Being walloped usually wakes me. What is it?

ADREA:  
she's doing up there?

She's on deck. She's been up there for hours. What do you think

FX: WATER LAPPING. TIMBERS CREAKING. FOOTSTEPS ON DECK.

CARIMA:  
sunrise in Egypt.

I don't think there is a more beautiful sight anywhere than

ADREA:           Is that why you're up here?

CARIMA:                       Partly. I have missed the sunrise, more than I could have  
imagined. But I want to see Thebes. It's such a beautiful city. I don't want to miss a moment  
of it.

KERIDES:           You miss your home?

CARIMA:                       I have been away so long. Would you not miss your home?

KERIDES:                       I don't know. I never had a home until I came to Alexandria.

CARIMA:                       I barely left Thebes in my first 16 years. There. I can see  
buildings. No, this cannot be Thebes. It cannot be. Take us to shore. Now! Take us in to  
shore.

FX: BUSY, BUSTLING BUZZ OF A CITY. RATTLE OF A UNIFORM RUNNING.

KARNAK:                       Adrea, what in the name of Anubis is happening?

ADREA:                       Erimem... Carima... whatever her name is - she saw the city  
and ran into it.

KARNAK:           I knew she couldn't be trusted.

ADREA:                       She was really upset when she saw the city.

KERIDES:                       She called it a beautiful city... it was when she saw her home  
city in such disrepair that she got upset. I think I know where she is.

KARNAK:           Where?

FX: BIRD SONG. FOOTSTEPS.

KERIDES:           There she is. She's come home.

ADREA:           To a pile of ruins?



KERIDES:

A secret chamber? Somewhere Pharaoh could take refuge?

CARIMA:

No. Wait, there's nothing above ground... but there is a tunnel from the Palace of Concubines which comes out to the west. If that is still clear we could escape through that. It was to allow pharaoh's women to escape capture.

KARNAK: Lead the way.

FX: RUNNING.

KERIDES: How far is it?

CARIMA: We'll make it - most of us.

MENTEP: I'm slowing you down.

KARNAK: We're not leaving you, old friend.

MENTEP: My good friend... they won't know who I am. I'll trust in you to get me back.

CARIMA: You are a brave man, Mentep.

MENTEP: Not brave, just old. Now go, and protect Egypt. Above all, protect Egypt.

KARNAK: I'll see you soon, old friend. Come on.

ADREA: I'm staying with Mentep.

KERIDES: Adrea?

ADREA: We can't leave him alone.

KERIDES: Then I'll stay.

MENTEP: Karnak will need you, Kerides.

ADREA: Kerides, I know I'll be all right. Now just go.

CARIMA: We must go.

KARNAK: Come on, Thinker. We have to move. That's an order. Move.

KERIDES: Adrea...

ADREA: Go!

FX: RUNNING.

MENTEP: Thank you for staying, my dear. I fear you may regret it.

ADREA: I blame Kerides for this.

MENTEP: Why?

ADREA: Because I blame him for everything, I suppose. It lets him know who's in charge.

FX: HORSES GALLOP FORWARD.

MENTEP: Don't look afraid, child.

ADREA: I'm not afraid. I'm terrified.

FX: HORSE PULLS TO A HALT.

ONACIOS: You are with the fleet from Alexandria.

MENTEP: Are we?

ONACIOS: You were seen disembarking from one of their ships.

MENTEP: Then we must be with their fleet.

ONACIOS: Who are you?

MENTEP: Nobody important.

ONACIOS: Then you will die here.

MENTEP: But nobody trivial either.

ONACIOS: Don't play games with me, old man. You carry yourself with the arrogance of someone who is important. Girl, who is this man?

MENTEP: You will have no luck there. My servant is mute. She does not speak. That is why I chose her for this trip.

ONACIOS: Typical secretive Egyptian. Do not worry, girl. We do not make war on servants. Your master may not be so lucky. And the friends who abandoned

him will definitely be less fortunate. They will die among the ruins.

FX: RUNNING.

KERIDES: We shouldn't have left them.

CARIMA: There was no choice. Mentep would have slowed us all. Do not waste an old man's courage - do not waste your woman's courage - by letting us be caught.

KARNAK: She's right, young Thinker.

KERIDES: I know. And Adrea's not my... oh never mind.

KARNAK: Where's this secret passage to talked about?

CARIMA: In here.

FX: SCRABBLING OVER ROCKS.

CARIMA: This was the Palace of the Concubines. My mother lived here. I visited her often.

KARNAK: Does that sound true to you, Thinker?

KERIDES: From all I've read, yes.

KARNAK: Which way?

CARIMA: This way... no! The ceiling has collapsed. We're blocked. Try this way.

KARNAK: Try? You don't know?

CARIMA: There are changes since I was here last.

KARNAK: Stop this nonsense now. You're not Pharaoh and you've never been here.

CARIMA: You can either stand here shouting angrily and waiting to die or you can follow me and live.

FX: MOVING FOOTSTEPS.

KARNAK: We've no choice. Follow her.

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

CARIMA:  
should slide open.

Here. This is the place. A tapestry used to hang here. The wall

KARNAK: Do it.

FX: DISTANT FOOTSTEPS.

KARNAK: They're getting close. Open it.

CARIMA: Press these letters... It's not moving!

SOLDIER: Try this way.

KARNAK: If you can't open it we're dead!

**FOURTH COMMERCIAL**

FX: MUFFLED VOICES AND FOOTSTEPS.

SOLDIER: (MUFFLED)  
No sign of them.

KARNAK: That was close.

CARIMA: How did you get the door to open, Kerides?

KERIDES: Languages change over time. The words you spelled out would be spelled a little differently a few centuries later. I just pressed the new letters.

KARNAK: Good work.

CARIMA: Do you believe me now, General?

KARNAK: I might have - if Kerides hadn't had to save us. Lead the way.

CARIMA: Why not get Kerides to do it?

KARNAK: Don't push me, girl.

CARIMA: Then stop fighting me. I am not your enemy.

KERIDES: Which way is it... Erimem, which way?

CARIMA: Straight ahead. Ignore all of the chambers and passages that branch off. Just keep going straight ahead.

KARNAK: Take the lead, Kerides.

FX: OUTSIDE THE PASSAGE FOOTSTEPS ON RUBBLE.

ONACIOS:           Where are they? Are they dead?

SOLDIER:           Sir, they... they escaped.

ONACIOS:           How could they escape?

SOLDIER:           We surrounded the ruin but...

ONACIOS:                       Idiot! You will pay for this when this mission is complete. So, old man. Your friends are resourceful.

MENTEP:                       I don't doubt that they are. Although I wouldn't exactly call them friends.

ONACIOS:           What would you call them?

MENTEP:           Jailers?

ONACIOS:           You're a criminal.

MENTEP:                       I'm a businessman. A trader in... let's call them unique royal antiquities.

ONACIOS:           Tomb robbing.

MENTEP:                       I have never robbed a tomb, royal or otherwise. However, I may have handled some artifacts from the tombs... and I may have some expertise on the royal tombs in the great valley. That was what they wanted to talk to me about anyway.

ONACIOS:                       They must have heard we were here. They want to find the tomb before we can.

MENTEP:                       They only said it was urgent to find a particular tomb. But it would explain why they arrested me with no proof at all.

ONACIOS:           Why were you here? In the palace ruins.

MENTEP:                       If I help them, they'll have proof of my... activities. If I don't, they'll execute me. On the other hand, if I happened to get lost while doing some research here - and it would be easy to get lost here - I could arrange for my possessions to be removed from Alexandria before the General gets back there.

ONACIOS:                       I'll offer you a better deal. Help us and we will get you out of Egypt. We'll make you a wealthy man.



MENTEP:  
Alexandria?

I'm already wealthy. Can you get my possessions from

ONACIOS:

No promises but we'll try. If you help us find the tomb.

MENTEP:

I don't have a choice. I'm finished in Alexandria.

ONACIOS: If you betray me - you're just finished.

FX: FOOTSTEPS IN SAND.

KERIDES:

What do you think the mercenaries will do?

KARNAK:

You're the Thinker. What would you do?

KERIDES:

Get to the valley as fast as I could.

CARIMA:

But we are going to get there first. If we set our defences we can protect the entrance to the valley.

KERIDES:

How will we get Adrea and Vizier Mentep back?

CARIMA:

It is best if you think of them as dead already.

KERIDES:

I won't. No. They're not dead.

KARNAK:

It's war, Kerides. You can't think of individual friends - only the battle.

CARIMA:

The troops are rested. We should march to the valley immediately.

KARNAK:

I agree.

(BELLOWS)

Captain! Get the men ready. We march now!

FX: HORSES WHINNEY AND SOLDIERS MARCH.

ADREA:

(QUIETLY)

Would it hurt them to give us horses?

MENTEP:

(ALSO QUIETLY)

Quiet, Adrea. You're supposed to be mute.

ADREA: (QUIETLY)  
Kerides would love that.

FX: HORSE APPROACHES.

ONACIOS: Keep the pace up, old man.

MENTEP: I'll do my best.

ONACIOS: Just do it. You have slowed us enough.

MENTEP: We should see the mouth of the valley after we round this mountain.

ONACIOS: We'll have to move quickly to find an empty tomb. You. Scout ahead.

SOLDIER: Yes, sir.

FX: HORSE GALLOPS OFF.

ONACIOS: How many tombs have you looted?

MENTEP: Looting is an ugly word.

ONACIOS: And an ugly business. But we're both in it so why pretend otherwise?

MENTEP: Do you have water there? The sand is attacking my throat.

ONACIOS:  
Here.

FX: WATER HANDED OVER. SLOSHES AS HE DRINKS.

MENTEP: Thank you. Adrea, drink this - quietly.

FX: WATER SLOSHES AGAIN.

ONACIOS: Is she a slave or a servant? If she's for sale...

MENTEP: A servant - and definitely not for sale.

ONACIOS: And more than a servant? You old goat.

FX: ADREA MAKING A MUTED 'UH?' SOUND.

ONACIOS:  
too.

Very wise. Find one who won't tell your wife? Pretty one,

FX: ADREA MAKING A SNORTING SOUND.

ONACIOS:           We've wasted enough time. Get moving.

FX: WALKING ON SAND AND STONE.

MENTEP:           It'll be all right, Adrea.

FX: GALLOPING HORSE.

SOLDIER:           Sir, the Egyptian troops are in place.

ONACIOS:           What?

SOLDIER:           They're setting up defensive lines.

ONACIOS:           Prepare the men for battle.

FX: HORSE GALLOPS OFF.

ONACIOS:                           This is your fault, old man. If you had been quicker...

MENTEP:           I'm sorry.

ONACIOS:           You will be. I'll cut your heart out.

ADREA:            Hey. Have some water?

ONACIOS:           What?

FX: THE WATER BAG HITS ONACIOS. HE FALLS OFF HIS HORSE. ONACIOS MOANS AS HE HITS THE GROUND.

ADREA:            Get on the horse.

FX: HORSE SNORTING.

MENTEP:           Steady. Steady.

FX: MENTEP CLAMBERING ONTO THE HORSE.

MENTEP:                           I'm up. Get up behind me, Adrea. Take my hand.

FX: ADREA YELPS.

ONACIOS:            You're going nowhere.

ADREA:            Get off me. Get off.

MENTEP:           Adrea.

FX: ADREA STRUGGLING WITH ONACIOS.

ONACIOS:           Spirited brat.

ADREA:            Go. Mentep, go.

ONACIOS:           Mentep? The vizier?

MENTEP:           Adrea, I...

ADREA:            Go. Just go!

MENTEP:           The gods protect you.

FX: HORSE GALLOPS OFF.

ONACIOS:                          Damn him. And damn you, girl. At least you have a tongue in your head - you can scream when I gut you.

ADREA:            And they'll rip you apart for it.

ONACIOS:                          Are you important to them? You seemed important to Pharoah's vizier. You might be useful after all.

FX: GALLOPING HORSE.

KARNAK:           A horse has broken their lines.

KERIDES:           I think it... yes, it's Vizier Mentep.

KARNAK:                          He escaped. Let him through the lines. Let him pass.

KERIDES:           I can't see Adrea. She's not with him.

FX: HORSE STOPS.

KARNAK:           I knew they couldn't keep you.

KERIDES: Vizier. What about Adrea? Where's Adrea?

MENTEP: I'm sorry, Kerides. I had to leave her. I only got away because of her courage. I'm so sorry, my boy.

KERIDES: Is she alive?

MENTEP: Yes. She's alive. But we will have to win this battle to keep her that way.

CARIMA: They are coming.

FX: THE THUMP OF FOOTSTEPS AND THE BEAT OF A DRUM.

KARNAK: There's more of them than I expected. A lot more.

MENTEP: Then you had better find me a sword. One last battle together, old friend.

KARNAK: One more battle.

FX: A DISTANT TRUMPET.

KARNAK: Here they come.

**FIFTH COMMERCIAL**

KERIDES: Why are they waiting?

KARNAK: Are you in a hurry to fight, young Thinker?

CARIMA: Their numbers are far greater than ours. They have no need to hurry. They can wait and let us see how hopeless our position is. Battles are fought in the mind as often as on the field. Remember how strong our defensive position is. And do not show them your fear.

KERIDES: I'm not afraid.

CARIMA: Then you are braver than I am. I was terrified before my first battle. Look inside your heart and hold your courage.

KERIDES: I'm ready.

MENTEP: No. I don't want you two in the battle.

CARIMA: I will not abandon Egypt's soldiers just to hide.

MENTEP: No, I mean I have a task for you. If we lose this battle, we need to make sure that Onacios and his men don't take the tomb. If the battle goes badly, do what you can to stop them. Collapse the main shaft into the tomb... anything. Do you understand?

CARIMA: I don't know if we can.

MENTEP: Trust Kerides to find a way.

CARIMA: We will meet again after the battle.

KARNAK: In this world or the next.

CARIMA: You are a brave man, General.

KARNAK: And if you're not a pharaoh, you should be.

FX: THE BEATING OF SWORDS AGAINST SHIELDS.

MENTEP: They're coming. You two, go. Go now.

KERIDES: All right, lead the way.

FX: RUNNING FOOTSTEPS.

MENTEP: Changed your mind about her, Karnak?

KARNAK: She's got spirit.

MENTEP: We're going to need our own spirit, my friend. And I need to ask a favour of you.

KARNAK: Ask it.

MENTEP: They know who I am... I have no doubt they'll try to make me talk, or at least use me as barter. If needs be, you must make sure I'm not taken alive.

KARNAK: You know what you're asking.

MENTEP: That's why I'm asking you. My old friend.

KARNAK: I'll do the right thing. Now let's get this started.  
(SHOUTING)  
Archers! Stand ready - fire!

FX: ARROWS LOOSED THROUGH THE AIR.

KARNAK: Second bank of archers, stand ready.

FX: FOOTSTEPS IN THE SAND AND LOOSE STONE.

KERIDES: Do you have your bearings, Erimem?

CARIMA: The valley has not changed much in the last thousand years - except that the tombs now lying open were sealed the last time I was here. For all time, we thought. It's here. Somewhere. Let me check... the crest of the valley... yes. Here. It's below this cliff face. I recognize it.

KERIDES: There's nothing here. Just sand and rock.

CARIMA: Dig the sand away and you will see.

FX: SAND BEING MOVED.

KERIDES: Nothing. It's just rock. There's nothing here.

CARIMA: There must be. Keep digging. Move to the left.

KERIDES: There's nothing... no, wait. Wait. There's a smooth edge... a doorway?

FX: SAND BEING SCRABBLED AWAY.

KERIDES: Let me read...

CARIMA: There, inside the cartouche.

KERIDES: Erimemushinteperem... you were right.

CARIMA: My tomb. It is a very strange thing to see my own tomb.

KERIDES: We need to hide the entrance again or bring the tomb down.

CARIMA: Move, I cannot read the inscription.

KERIDES: It's a warning. Anyone defiling the tomb will face the wrath of the gods, Ra will bring the weight of a dark sky down upon those who defy the sacred resting place... this bit is a poem to Erimem's beauty... here it's...

ONACIOS: (A LITTLE DISTANT)  
You found it!

KERIDES: What? Adrea?

ADREA: Kerides.

KERIDES: Back away from the ledge. Please. Don't hurt her.

ONACIOS: Step away from the tomb and I will let the girl live.

FX: SWORD UNSHEATHED.

CARIMA: You will kill me before you take this tomb.

ONACIOS: No - I'll kill this noisy brat.

KERIDES: No.

ONACIOS: She's your woman?

ADREA: I'm not his...

ONACIOS: Quiet.

ADREA: (A PAINED YELP THEN):  
All right, I'm his woman.

KERIDES: Take the tomb. Just don't hurt her. Please. Don't hurt her.

CARIMA: Stop begging! Have some courage. He has only two soldiers.  
We can defeat them.

ONACIOS: The battle served as a good diversion. More than this could  
never have climbed the rock face without being seen.

CARIMA: Killing you will be enough.

KERIDES: Let him have the tomb.

CARIMA: My brothers are here. They were murdered. Their lives were  
taken for no good reason. At least let them take their final rest undisturbed.

KERIDES: Erimem, these are just things. The gold and the jewels. They  
may be worth a lot of money but are they worth Adrea's life? Your brothers still live in  
your heart.



CARIMA: If it was Adrea's tomb, would you let it be defiled?

KERIDES: If it would save a life. The riddle isn't difficult. I would let Onacios open the tomb.

CARIMA: You would?

KERIDES: Definitely.

CARIMA: She must mean a great deal to you.

KERIDES: Back away from the tomb's entrance. Let him have it.

FX: FOOTSTEPS IN THE SAND.

ONACIOS: Very wise. Stay back from the doorway. Let me see it.  
Superstitious nonsense.

CARIMA: Kerides, are you sure?

ONACIOS: You can have your woman. Until I kill you both.

KERIDES: I'm sure.

ONACIOS: You, hold the girl.

SOLDIER: Yes sir.

ONACIOS: You, with me. Clear the doorway.

ADREA: Kerides.

ONACIOS: (STRAINING)  
How does it open? Does it swing open? Does it need smashed  
apart?

KERIDES: It's sensitive to pressure.

ONACIOS: (STRAINING)

It'll open.

FX: A DULL ROCK CLICKING SOUND.

ONACIOS: Is that it?

KERIDES: Run!

FX: A RUMBLE OF FALLING SAND AND DIRT AND ROCKS.

ONACIOS:           No. NO!

FX: ONACIOS'S SCREAM BURIED IN THE LANDSLIDE.

KERIDES:           Landslide! Run!

FX: COUGHING AS THE LANDSLIDE COMES TO AN END.

KERIDES:           It's stopped.

FX: SCRAPE OF SWORD ON STONE.

CARIMA:                               You. Release Adrea and I will let you live. Your leader is dead. Release her or join him in death.

FX: SWORD DROPPED.

KERIDES:           Adrea, are you hurt?

ADREA:                               Apart from the bruises, the scratches, the burn marks from the ropes...

KERIDES:           There. At least you're untied now.

FX: ADREA PUNCHES A SOLDIER. A YELL OF RAGE.

ADREA:                               And now I think I smashed a bone in my hand.

KERIDES:           Was it worth it?

ADREA:                               What do you think? If you wake him up I'll smash the other hand on him.

KERIDES:           I believe you.

CARIMA:           The tomb is gone. Hidden by sand.

KERIDES:                               The warning on the tomb door was simple enough – a heavy sky would fall. If you look up from the tomb, all you see is rock. Rock is a very heavy sky.

CARIMA:                               The tomb is safely hidden and Onacios will keep guard over it through the centuries. That is fitting.

FX: SWORDS, SOUNDS OF BATTLE.

KARNAK: Mentep!

MENTEP: We're losing ground.

KARNAK: Keep fighting.

MENTEP: Remember your promise.

KARNAK: Just keep...

CARIMA: (A LITTLE DISTANT)  
Stop! Stop the battle!

KARNAK: What is she doing? She's an easy target for their archers up there.

CARIMA: (STILL THAT DISTANCE)  
Onacios is dead! Your leader is dead, eaten by the sands of Egypt.

FX: RUMBLE OF TROOPS.

KERIDES: (ALSO DISTANT)  
It's true! Look! His captive is free! And this man was his personal guard.

SOLDIER: It's true.

CARIMA: (POWERFUL, COMMANDING - SHE IS A PHARAOH)  
Throw down your swords and you may leave Egypt alive.  
Fight and you will all die. I swear it by the blood of my ancestors!

FX: A PAUSE, THEN A SWORD THROWN DOWN, THEN ANOTHER. AND ANOTHER. SLOWLY, A CHEER RISES... A LOUD ROARING CHEER.

KARNAK: I don't believe it.

MENTEP: Yes, you do.

FX: FADE OUT CHEER.

FX: LAPPING WATER.

ADREA: The ships are almost ready to sail back to Alexandria.

CARIMA: I must leave soon.

ADREA: Must you?

CARIMA: I must return this body to its true owner.

ADREA: Before you go... look, I'm no good at doing this. I know Kerides had it worked out but still... they're your brothers and... well...

CARIMA: Adrea, thank you. For helping me save their tomb.

ADREA: (A BIT LOST)  
Oh. You're welcome. Really.

KERIDES: Hello. We'll be sailing in a few minutes. You should get aboard.

ADREA: Stop telling me what to do. I'm not your woman.

KERIDES: I never said you were.

ADREA: I was talking to me.

CARIMA: Remember what I said, Adrea. And thank you also, Kerides.

KERIDES: I promise, we will forget where the tomb is placed.

FX: FOOTSTEPS ON WOODEN BOARD.

MENTEP: Ah, there you all are. Carima... Pharaoh... Karnak has something he wants to say.

KARNAK: Welcome aboard... mighty pharaoh.

CARIMA: (BACK AS SHE WAS – THE REAL CARIMA)  
Mighty Pharaoh? What are you talking about? Have you been drinking? And what am I doing here? Wherever here is?

ADREA: She's gone.

KERIDES: It's the soothsayer again.

ADREA: I wonder if she saw this coming.

MENTEP: Remarkable young woman.

CARIMA: Thank you.

KARNAK: Not you. Well, not quite. Go below and somebody will explain everything later. Probably.

MENTEP: You look troubled, Kerides.

KERIDES: I can't explain this. There's no science to explain it.

MENTEP: Science? Magic? What's the difference? It happened. Now you have a mystery to explore and an answer to seek. That's quite a gift she left you.

KARNAK: Mentep - I need a drink.

MENTEP: So do I. Let's go and work out what we're going to tell that poor soothsayer girl.

FX: FOOTSTEPS LEAVING.

ADREA: I'm not your woman.

KERIDES: I know.

ADREA: Just reminding you...

KERIDES: Fine.

ADREA: (THOUGHTFUL)  
Kerides...

KERIDES: Yes?

ADREA: What do you think of children?

# RETURN OF THE QUEEN

## Notes

We often default to writing about Egypt. Actually, it's more my default than Claire's. My first Doctor Who, *The Eye of the Scorpion*, was set in Egypt as was its prequel novel, *The Coming of the Queen*. Purely as a self-indulgent joke, I started dropping little links in between the Kerides stories and the Doctor Who stories I had written in Egypt. Little things like throwing in minor plot points as a historical fact Kerides is investigating, or using a family name that was mentioned in the Doctor Who stories.

One of the most gratifying things about the work we did in Doctor Who was that I created one of the Doctor's companions, Erimem. Erimemushushinteperem if we go with her full name. She was an uncrowned Pharaoh of ancient Egypt. At least she was in Doctor Who. She was slightly based on the real Pharaoh Hatchepsut, but most of her history and personality were changed considerably.

A while after it became clear that Erimem had finished her time with the Doctor, I started wondering about how best to continue her adventures. I own the character, not Big Finish or the BBC, so I could do what I want with her, and we had talked about doing something a bit different with a Kerides story, taking him a bit out of his comfort zone. Putting all of that together, we decided to do an epic war story with a bit of time travel and mystery thrown in. The plot we came up with tied in very closely with Erimem's origins and played on two of her real character traits – love of family and loyalty to Egypt. Both of them are about duty, which was always a big part of her character. She travelled through time to do the right thing for her family and for her country.

Caroline Morris was wonderful as Erimem for Big Finish but getting her across to Seattle for the recording was never going to be in the budget, so we decided to build into the story that probably the only actress who

couldn't play Erimem was Caroline Morris. I was careful to let Caroline know that this was a one-off and Erimem's own voice was still hers.

With all of that worked out, we just had to write the script – and Larry let us know it was needed for a couple of days after Christmas. We planned to write it a couple of days before Christmas and give it a quick once over, rewrite and polish, and get it to Larry by Christmas Day. As is often the way at that time of year, things got in the way and I wound up spending a few hours on Christmas Day finishing the first draft. As memory serves a few messages and emails went back and forth between Claire and myself on Boxing Day, I made the changes and it was off to Larry by close of play on Boxing Day to be recorded a few days later.

It's a very strange sensation hearing a different reading of a character you know so well. Even though I knew Caroline wouldn't be playing Erimem in *Return of the Queen*, her rhythms had been in our heads when Erimem's dialogue was being written.

Kerides The Thinker can be heard on Imagination Theater at **[www.jimfrenchproductions.com](http://www.jimfrenchproductions.com)**. Every episode produced to date is available either in a box set or as downloads. Each episode is available individually to download for, at time of publishing, \$1.99.

For those who prefer their plays on CD, Volume One contains the first six episodes of the series and Volume Two has the next five episodes, including the double length Return of the Queen.

Details of Imagination Theater's productions of Kerides The Thinker and how they can be obtained are available at **[www.jimfrenchproductions.com](http://www.jimfrenchproductions.com)**.

## REGULAR CAST

Ulric Dihle as Kerides  
Sarah Schenkkan as Adrea  
Stephen Weyte as Mentep  
David White and Steve Manning both played General Karnak  
Rachel Glass as Heptera  
Larry Albert as Shem

Also:  
Jennifer Lin as Adrea in Too Much Wine  
Christine Mosere as Carima and Erimem in Return of the Queen

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